THE

HISTORY OF ENGLAND.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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THE

HISTORY OF ENGLAND,

FROM THE

EARLIEST TIMES

TO THE

DEATH OF GEORGE THE SECOND,

By OLIVER GOLDSMITH, M.B.

TWELFTH EDITION, CORRECTED.

WITH A CONTINUATION

TO

THE TREATY OF AMIENS.

By CHARLES COOTE, LL.D.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SAR... TANJORE ... MAHAL.

LONDON:

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PREFACE.

FROM the favorable reception given to my Abridgement of Roman History, published some time since, several friends, and others, whose business leads them to consult the wants of the public, have been induced to suppose that an English History written on the same plan would be acceptable. It was their opinion, that we still wanted a work of this kind, where the narrative, though very concise, is not totally without interest, and the facts, though crowded, are yet distinctly seen.

The business of abridging the works of others has hitherto fallen to the lot of very dull men; and the art of blotting, which an eminent critic calls the most difficult of all others, has been usually practised by those who found themselves unable to write. Hence our abridgements are

generally more tedious than the works from which they pretend to relieve us; and they have effectually embarrassed that road which they laboured to shorten.

As the present compiler starts with such humble competitors, it will scarcely be thought vanity in him if he boasts himself their superior. Of the many abridgements of our own history hitherto published, not one seems possessed of any share of merit or reputation: some have been written in dialogue, or merely in the stiffness of an index, and some to answer the purposes of a party. A very small share of taste, therefore, was sufficient to keep the compiler from the defects of the one; and a very small share of philosophy from the misrepresentations of the other.

It is not easy, however, to satisfy the different expectations of mankind in a work of this kind, calculated for every apprehension, and on which all are consequently capable of forming some judgement. Some may say that it is too long to pass under the denomination of an abridgement; and others, that it is too dry to be admitted as a history: it may be objected, that reflection is almost entirely banished to make room for facts,

and yet that many facts are wholly omitted, which might be necessary to be known.

It must be confessed that all those objections are partly true; for it is impossible, in the same work, at once to attain contrary advantages. The compiler, who is stinted in room, must often sacrifice interest to brevity; and, on the other hand, while he endeavours to amuse, must frequently transgress the limits to which his plan should confine him. Thus all such as desire only amusement may be disgusted with his brevity, and such as seek for information may object to his displacing facts for empty description.

To attain the greatest number of advantages with the fewest inconveniences, is all that can be attained in an abridgement, the very name of which implies imperfection. It will be sufficient, therefore, to satisfy the writer's wishes, if the present work be found a plain unaffected narrative of facts, with just ornament enough to keep attention awake, and with reflection barely sufficient to set the reader upon thinking.—Very moderate abilities were equal to such an undertaking; and it is hoped the performance will satisfy such as take up books to be informed or amused, without

much considering who the writer is, or envying any success he may have had in a former compilation.

As the present publication is designed for the benefit of those who intend to lay a foundation for future study, or desire to refresh their memories upon the old, or who think a moderate share of history sufficient for the purposes of life, recourse has been had only to those authors which are best known, and those facts only have been selected which are allowed on all hands to be true. Were an epitome of history the field of displaying erudition, the author could show that he has read many books which others have neglected; and that he also could advance many anecdotes which are at present very little known. But it must be remembered, that all these minute recoveries could be inserted only to the exclusion of more material facts, which it would be unpardonable to omit. He foregoes, therefore, the petty ambition of being thought a reader of forgotten books,—his aim being not to add to our present stock of history, but to contract it.

The books which have been used in this abridgement are chiefly Rapin, Carte, Smollett, and Hume.

They have each their peculiar admirers, in proportion as the reader is studious of historical antiquities, fond of minute anecdote, a warm partisan, or a deliberate reasoner. Of these I have particularly taken Hume for my guide, as far as he goes; and it is but justice to say, that wherever I was obliged to abridge his work, I did it with reluctance, as I scarce cut out a line that did not contain a beauty.

But though I must warmly subscribe to the learning, elegance, and depth of Mr. Hume's History, yet I cannot entirely acquiesce in his principles. With regard to religion, he seems desirous of playing a double part,—of appearing to some readers as if he reverenced, and to others as if he ridiculed it. He seems sensible of the political necessity of religion in every state; but at the same time he would every where insinuate that it owes its authority to no higher an origin. Thus he weakens its influence, while he contends for its utility; and vainly hopes, that while free-thinkers shall applaud his scepticism, real believers will reverence him for his zeal.

In his opinions respecting government, perhaps also he may be sometimes reprehensible; but in a

country like ours, where mutual contention contributes to the security of the constitution, it will be impossible for an historian, who attempts to have any opinion, to satisfy all parties. It is not yet decided in politics, whether the diminution of kingly power in England tends to increase the happiness or the freedom of the people. For my own part, from seeing the bad effects of the tyranny of the great in those republican states that pretend to be free, I cannot help wishing that our monarchs may still be allowed to enjoy the power of controlling the encroachments of the great at home. A king may easily be restrained from doing wrong, as he is but one man; but if a number of the great are permitted to divide all authority, who can punish them if they abuse it? Upon this principle, therefore, and not from any empty notion of divine or hereditary right, some may think I have leaned towards monarchy. But as, in the things I have hitherto written, I have neither allured the vanity of the great by flattery, nor satisfied the malignity of the vulgar by scandal, as I have endeavoured to get an honest reputation by liberal pursuits, it is hoped the reader will admit my impartiality.

THE

CONTINUATOR'S PREFACE.

THE name of GOLDSMITH is familiar to every class of readers. His poems and other works have passed through many editions, and are yet in a state of requisition. He was a better poet than historian: but his efforts in the latter capacity have been honored with praise; and this work, of which the fourth volume is a continuation, is sufficiently popular to claim a renewal of publication. It is, perhaps, too concise; but it is to be considered, that a great number of readers are content with an abridgement of more voluminous histories, and that many of those who have read larger works upon the same subject are occasionally inclined to have recourse to a compendium.

The continuation embraces a very remarkable period; and the events and transactions, worthy of record, are so numerous, that it is difficult to compress into one volume the vast fund which offers itself to an historic writer. Omissions and

errors will, therefore, be more readily excused by the candid reader. The author has endeavoured to unite propriety of remark, purity and force of language, with authenticity and correctness of statement; but he cannot boast of complete success. Every one is not a LIVY or a TACITUS, a DAVILA or a GUICCIARDINI, a HUME or a GIBBON.

It is proper to add, that the fourth volume is a new work, not a mere re-publication of the account of the present reign, which forms a part of the same author's HISTORY of ENGLAND.

HISTORY

OF

ENGLAND.

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S ... MAHAL.

CHAPTER I.

Of the Britons *before the Arrival of the* Romans.

It is fortunate for mankind, that those periods of history which are the least serviceable, are the least known. It has been the study of many learned men to rescue from obscurity, and throw light upon, those early ages when the Britons were wholly barbarous, and their country uncultivated. But these researches have generally terminated in conjecture; so that whence Britain was at first peopled, or took its name, is still uncertain. The variety of opinions upon this head serve to prove the futility of all.

It will, therefore, be sufficient to observe, that this beautiful island, by some thought the largest in the world, was called Britannia by the Romans long before the time of Cæsar. It is supposed that this name was originally given to it by the merchants who resorted hither from the continent. These

called the inhabitants by one common name of Briths, from the custom among the natives of painting their naked bodies and small shields with an azure blue, which in the language of the country was called *brith*, and which served to distinguish them from those strangers who came among them for the purpose of trade or alliance.

The Britons were very little known to the rest of the world before the time of the Romans. The coasts opposite Gaul, indeed, were frequented by merchants who traded thither for such commodities as the natives were able to produce. These, it is thought, after a time, possessed themselves of all the maritime places where they had at first been permitted to reside. There, finding the country fertile, and commodiously situated for trade, they settled upon the sea-side, and introduced the practice of agriculture. But it was very different with the inland inhabitants of the country, who considered themselves as the lawful possessors of the soil. These avoided all correspondence with the new-comers, whom they considered as intruders upon their property.

The inland inhabitants are represented as extremely numerous, living in cottages thatched with straw, and feeding large herds of cattle. Their houses were scattered all over the country, without observance of order or distance, being placed at smaller or greater intervals, as they were invited by the fertility of the soil, or the convenience of wood and water. They lived mostly upon milk, or flesh procured by the chase. What clothes they wore to cover any part of their bodies were usually the skins

of beasts; but much of their bodies (as the arms, legs, and thighs) was left naked, and those parts were usually painted blue. Their hair, which was long, flowed down upon their backs and shoulders, while their beards were kept close shaven, except upon the upper lip, where it was suffered to grow. The dress of savage nations is every where pretty much the same, being calculated rather to inspire terror than to excite love or respect.

The commodities exported from Britain were chiefly hides and tin. This metal was then thought peculiar to the island, and was in much request abroad, both in nearer and remoter regions. Some silver-mines were also known, but not in common use, as the inhabitants had little knowledge how to dig, refine, or improve them. Pearls also were frequently found on their shores, but neither clear nor coloured like the Oriental, and therefore in no great esteem among strangers. They had little iron; and what they had, was used either for arms, or for rings, which was a sort of money current among them. They had brass money also; but this was all brought from abroad.

Their language, customs, religion, and government, were generally the same with those of the Gauls, their neighbours of the continent. As to their government, it consisted of several small principalities, each under its respective leader; and this seems to be the earliest mode of dominion with which mankind is acquainted, and deduced from the natural privileges of paternal authority. Whether these small principalities descended by succession, or the princes were elected in consequence

of the advantages of age, wisdom, or valour in their families, is not recorded. Upon great or uncommon dangers a commander in chief was chosen by common consent, in a general assembly; and to him was committed the conduct of the general interest, the power of making peace, or leading to war. In the choice of a person to such power, it is easy to suppose that unanimity could not always be found; whence it often happened, that the separate tribes were defeated one after the other, before they could unite under a single leader for their mutual safety.

Their forces consisted chiefly of foot, and yet they could bring a considerable number of horse into the field upon great occasions. They likewise used chariots in battle, which, with short scythes fastened to the ends of the axle-trees, inflicted desperate wounds, spreading terror and devastation wheresoever they drove. Nor, while the chariots were thus destroying, were the warriors who conducted them unemployed. These darted their javelins against the enemy, ran along the beam, leaped on the ground, resumed their seat, stopped or turned their horses at full speed, and sometimes cunningly retreated to draw the enemy into confusion. Nothing can be more terrible than the idea of a charioteer thus driving furiously in the midst of dangers: but these machines seem to have been more dreadful than dangerous; for they were quickly laid aside when this brave people was instructed in the more regular arts of war.

The religion of the Britons was one of the most considerable parts of their government; and the

Druids, who were the guardians of it, possessed great authority among them. These endeavoured to impress the minds of the people with an opinion of their skill in the arts of divination; they offered sacrifices in public and private, and pretended to explain the immediate will of Heaven. No species of superstition was ever more horrible than theirs. Besides the severe penalties which they were permitted to inflict in this world, they inculcated the eternal transmigration of souls, and thus extended their authority as far as the fears of their votaries. They sacrificed human victims, which they burned in large wicker idols, made so capacious as to contain a multitude of persons at once, who were thus consumed together. The female Druids plunged their knives into the breasts of the prisoners taken in war, and prophesied from the manner in which the blood happened to stream from the wound. Their altars consisted of four broad stones, three set edgewise, and the fourth at top, many of which remain to this day. To these rites, tending to impress ignorance with awe, they added the austerity of their manners, and the simplicity of their lives. They lived in woods, caves, and hollow trees; their food was acorns and berries, and their drink water: by these arts they were not only respected, but almost adored by the people. They were admired not only for knowing more than other men, but for despising what all others valued and pursued. Hence they were patiently permitted to punish and correct crimes from which they themselves were supposed to be wholly free; and their authority was so great, that not only the pro-

perty but also the lives of the people were entirely at their disposal. No laws were instituted by the princes, or common assemblies, without their advice and approbation; no person was punished by bonds or death, without their passing sentence; no plunder taken in war was used by the captor, until the Druids determined what part they should seclude for themselves.

It may be easily supposed that the manners of the people took a tincture from the discipline of their teachers. Their lives were simple, but they were marked with cruelty and fierceness; their courage was great, but neither dignified by mercy nor perseverance. In short, to have a just idea of what the Britons then were, we have only to turn to the savage nations which still subsist in primæval rudeness. Temperate rather from necessity than choice; patient of fatigue, yet inconstant in attachment; bold, improvident, and rapacious:—such is the picture of savage life at present, and such it appears to have been from the beginning. Little entertainment, therefore, can be expected from the accounts of a nation thus circumstanced; nor can its transactions come properly under the notice of an historian, since they are too minutely divided to be exhibited at one view; the actors are too barbarous to interest the reader; and no skill can be shown in developing the motives and counsels of a people chiefly actuated by sudden and tumultuary gusts of passion.

CHAPTER II.

From the Descent *of* Julius Cæsar *to the relinquishing of the Island by the* Romans.

The Britons, in the rude and barbarous state in which we have just described them, seemed to stand in need of more polished instructors; and indeed whatever evils may attend the conquest of heroes, their success has generally produced one good effect, in disseminating the arts of refinement and humanity. It ever happens, when a barbarous nation is conquered by another more advanced in the arts of peace, that it gains in elegance a recompense for what it loses in liberty. The Britons had long remained in this rude but independent state, when Cæsar, having over-run Gaul with his victories, and willing still further to extend his fame, determined upon the conquest of a country that seemed to promise an easy triumph. He was allured neither by the riches nor by the renown of the inhabitants; but being ambitious rather of splendid than of useful conquests, he was willing to carry the Roman arms into a country, the remote situation of which would add seeming difficulty to the enterprise, and consequently produce an increase of reputation. His pretence was, to punish these islanders for having sent succours to the Gauls while he waged war against that nation, as well as for granting an asylum to such of the enemy as had sought protection from his resentment. The natives, informed of his intention, were sensible of the unequal contest, and

endeavoured to appease him by submission. He received their ambassadors with great complacency, and having exhorted them to continue steadfast in the same sentiments, in the mean time made preparations for the execution of his design. When the troops destined for the expedition were embarked, he set sail for Britain about midnight, and the next morning arrived on the coast near Dover, where he saw the rocks and cliffs covered with armed men to oppose his landing.

Ante Ch. 55.

Finding it impracticable to gain the shore where he first intended, from the agitation of the sea, and the impending mountains, he resolved to choose a landing-place of greater security. The place he chose was about eight miles further on, some suppose at Deal, where an inclining shore and a level country invited his attempts. The poor, naked, ill-armed Britons, we may well suppose, were but an unequal match for the disciplined Romans, who had before conquered Gaul, and afterwards became the conquerors of the world. However, they made a brave opposition against the veteran army; the conflicts between them were fierce, the losses mutual, and the success various. The Britons had chosen Cassibelaunus for their commander in chief; but the petty princes under his command, either desiring his station, or suspecting his fidelity, threw off their allegiance. Some of them fled with their forces into the internal parts of the kingdom; others submitted to Cæsar: till at length Cassibelaunus himself, weakened by so many desertions, resolved upon making what terms he was able,

while he yet had power to keep the field. The conditions offered by Cæsar, and accepted by him, were, that he should send to the continent double the number of hostages at first demanded, and that he should acknowledge subjection to the Romans.

The Romans were pleased with the name of this new and remote conquest, and the senate decreed a supplication of twenty days in consequence of their general's success. Having, therefore, in this manner rather discovered than subdued the southern parts of the island, Cæsar returned into Gaul with his forces, and left the Britons to enjoy their customs, religion, and laws. But the inhabitants, thus relieved from the terror of his arms, neglected the performance of their stipulations; and only two of their states sent over hostages according to the treaty. Cæsar, it is likely, was not much displeased at the omission, as it furnished him with a pretext of visiting the island once more, and completing a conquest which he had only begun.

Accordingly, the ensuing spring he set sail for Britain with eight hundred ships; and arriving at the place of his former descent, he landed without opposition. The islanders, being apprised of his invasion, had assembled an army, and marched down to the sea-side to oppose him; but seeing the number of his forces, and the whole sea, as it were, covered with his shipping, they were struck with consternation, and retired to their places of security. The Romans, however, pursued them to their retreats, until at last common danger in-

duced these poor barbarians to forget their former dissensions, and to unite their whole strength for the mutual defence of their liberty and possessions. Cassibelaunus was chosen to conduct the common cause; and for some time he harassed the Romans in their march, and revived the desponding hopes of his countrymen. But no opposition that undisciplined strength could make was able to repress the vigour and intrepidity of Cæsar. He discomfited the Britons in every action; he advanced into the country, passed the Thames in the face of the enemy, took and burned the capital city of Cassibelaunus, established his ally Mandubratius as sovereign of the Trinobantes; and having obliged the inhabitants to make new submissions, he again returned with his army into Gaul, having made himself rather the nominal than the real possessor of the island.

Whatever the stipulated tribute might have been, it is more than probable, as there was no authority left to exact it, that it was but indifferently paid. Upon the accession of Augustus, that emperor had formed a design of visiting Britain, but was diverted from it by an unexpected revolt of the Pannonians. Some years after he resumed his design; but being met in his way by the British ambassadors, who promised the accustomed tribute, and made the usual submissions, he desisted from his intention. The year following, finding them remiss in their supplies, and untrue to their former professions, he once more prepared for the invasion of the country; but a well-timed embassy again averted his indignation, and the submissions

he received seemed to satisfy his resentment: upon his death-bed he appeared sensible of the overgrown extent of the Roman empire, and recommended it to his successors never to enlarge their territories.

Tiberius followed the maxims of Augustus; and, wisely judging the empire already too extensive, made no attempt upon Britain. Some Roman soldiers having been wrecked on the British coast, the inhabitants not only assisted them with the greatest humanity, but sent them in safety back to their general. In consequence of these friendly dispositions, a constant intercourse of good offices subsisted between the two nations; the principal British nobility resorted to Rome, and many received their education there.

From that time the Britons began to improve in all the arts which contribute to the advancement of human nature. The first art which a savage people is generally taught by their politer neighbours, is that of war. The Britons thenceforward, though not wholly addicted to the Roman method of fighting, nevertheless adopted several of their improvements, as well in their arms as in their arrangement in the field. Their ferocity to strangers, for which they had been always remarkable, was mitigated; and they began to permit an intercourse of commerce, even in the internal parts of the country. They still, however, continued to live as herdsmen and hunters; a manifest proof that the country was yet but thinly inhabited. A nation of hunters can never be populous, as their subsistence is necessarily diffused over a large tract of

country, while the husbandman converts every part of nature to human use, and flourishes most by the vicinity of those whom he is to support.

The wild extravagances of Caligula, by which he threatened Britain with an invasion, served rather to expose him to ridicule, than the island to danger. The Britons therefore, for almost a century, enjoyed their liberty unmolested, till at length the Romans, in the reign of Claudius, began to think seriously of reducing them under their dominion. The expedition for this purpose was conducted in the beginning by Plautius and other commanders, with that success which usually attended the Roman arms.

A.D. 43. Claudius himself, finding affairs sufficiently prepared for his reception, made a journey thither, and received the submission of such states as, living by commerce, were willing to purchase tranquillity at the expense of freedom. It is true, that many of the inland provinces preferred their native simplicity to imported elegance, and, rather than bow their necks to the Roman yoke, offered their bosoms to the sword. But the southern coast, with all the adjacent inland country, was seized by the conquerors, who secured the possession by fortifying camps, building fortresses, and planting colonies. The other parts of the country either thought themselves in no danger, or continued patient spectators of the approaching devastation.

Caractacus was the first who seemed willing, by a vigorous effort, to rescue his country, and repel its insulting and rapacious conquerors. The venality

and corruption of the Roman prætors and officers, who were appointed to levy the contributions in Britain, served to excite the indignation of the natives, and give spirit to his attempts. This rude soldier, though with inferior forces, continued, for about the space of nine years, to oppose and harass the Romans; so that at length Ostorius Scapula was sent over to command their armies. He was more successful than his predecessors. He advanced the Roman conquests over Britain, pierced the country of the Silures, a warlike nation along the banks of the Severn, and at length [51.] came up with Caractacus, who had taken possession of a very advantageous post upon an inaccessible mountain, washed by a deep and rapid stream. The unfortunate British general, when he saw the enemy approaching, drew up his army, composed of different tribes, and going from rank to rank, exhorted them to strike the last blow for liberty, safety, and life. To these exhortations his soldiers replied with shouts of determined valour. But what could undisciplined bravery avail against the attack of an army skilled in all the arts of war, and inspired by a long train of conquests? The Britons were, after an obstinate resistance, totally routed; and a few days after Caractacus himself was delivered up to the conquerors by Cartismandua, queen of the Brigantes, with whom he had taken refuge. The capture of this general was received with such joy at Rome, that Claudius commanded that he should be brought from Britain, in order to be exhibited as a spectacle to the Roman people. Accordingly, on the day appointed for

that purpose, the emperor, ascending his throne, ordered the captives, and Caractacus among the number, to be brought into his presence. The vassals of the British king, with the spoils taken in war, were first brought forward; these were followed by his family, who, with abject lamentations, were seen to implore for mercy. Last of all came Caractacus, with an undaunted air and a dignified aspect. He appeared no way dejected at the amazing concourse of spectators that were gathered upon this occasion, but, casting his eyes on the splendours that surrounded him, "Alas!" cried he, "how is it possible that a people possessed of such magnificence at home, could envy me an humble cottage in Britain?" When brought into the emperor's presence, he is said to have addressed him in the following manner: "Had my moderation been equal to my birth and fortune, I had arrived in this city not as a captive but as a friend. But my present misfortunes redound as much to your honour as to my disgrace; and the obstinacy of my opposition serves to increase the splendours of your victory. Had I surrendered myself in the beginning of the contest, neither my disgrace nor your glory would have attracted the attention of the world, and my fate would have been buried in general oblivion. I am now at your mercy; but if my life be spared, I shall remain an eternal monument of your clemency and moderation." The emperor was affected with the British hero's misfortunes, and won by his address. He ordered him to be unchained upon the spot, with the rest of the captives; and the first use they made of their

liberty was to go and prostrate themselves before the empress Agrippina, who, as some suppose, had been an intercessor for their freedom.

Notwithstanding these misfortunes, the Britons were not subdued, and this island was regarded by the ambitious Romans as a field in which military honour might still be acquired. The Britons made one expiring effort to recover their liberty in the time of Nero, taking advantage of the absence of Paulinus, the Roman general, who was employed in subduing the Isle of Anglesey. [60.] That small island, separated from Britain by a narrow channel, still continued the chief seat of the Druidical superstitions, and constantly afforded a retreat to their defeated forces. It was thought necessary therefore to subdue that place, in order to extirpate a religion that disdained submission to foreign laws or leaders; and Paulinus, the greatest general of his age, undertook the task. The Britons endeavoured to obstruct his landing on that last retreat of their superstitions and liberties, both by the force of their arms and the terrors of their religion. The priests and islanders were drawn up in order of battle upon the shore, to oppose his landing. The women, dressed like Furies, with dishevelled hair, and torches in their hands, poured forth the most terrible execrations. Such a sight at first confounded the Romans, and fixed them motionless on the spot; so that they received the first assault without opposition. But Paulinus, exhorting his troops to despise the menaces of an absurd superstition, impelled them to the attack, drove the Britons off the field, burned the Druids

in the same fires they had prepared for their captive enemies, and destroyed all their consecrated groves and altars.

In the mean time the Britons, taking advantage of his absence, resolved, by a general insurrection, to free themselves from that state of abject servitude to which they were reduced by the Romans. They had many motives to aggravate their resentment; the greatness of their taxes, which were levied with unremitting severity; the cruel insolence of their conquerors, who reproached that very poverty which they had caused; but particularly the cruel treatment of Boádicea, queen of the Iceni, drove them at last into open rebellion. Prasatagus, king of the Iceni, at his death, had bequeathed one-half of his dominions to the Romans, and the other to his daughters; thus hoping, by the sacrifice of a part, to secure the rest in his family; but it had a different effect; for the Roman procurator immediately took possession of the whole; and when Boadicea, the widow of the deceased, attempted to remonstrate, he ordered her to be scourged like a slave, and violated the chastity of her daughters. These outrages were sufficient to produce a revolt through the whole island. The Iceni, being the most deeply interested in the quarrel, were the first to take arms; all the other states soon followed the example: and Boadicea, a woman of great beauty and masculine spirit, was appointed to head the common forces, which amounted to two hundred and thirty thousand fighting men. These, exasperated by their wrongs, attacked several of the Roman settle-

ments and colonies with success. Paulinus hastened to relieve London, which was already a flourishing colony; but found on his arrival that it would be requisite, for the general safety, to abandon that place to the merciless fury of the enemy. London was therefore soon reduced to ashes; such of the inhabitants as remained in it were massacred; and the Romans, with all other strangers, to the number of seventy thousand, were cruelly put to the sword. Flushed with these successes, the Britons no longer sought to avoid the enemy, but boldly came to the place where Paulinus awaited their arrival, posted in a very advantageous manner with a body of ten thousand men. The battle was obstinate and bloody. Boadicea herself appeared in a chariot with her two daughters, and harangued her army with masculine firmness; but the irregular and undisciplined bravery of her troops was unable to resist the cool intrepidity of the Romans. They were routed with great slaughter; eighty thousand perished in the field, and an infinite number were made prisoners; while Boadicea herself, fearing to fall into the hands of the enraged victor, put an end to her life by poison. Nero soon after recalled Paulinus from a government, where, by suffering and inflicting so many severities, he was judged improper to compose the angry and alarmed minds of the natives. After an interval, Cerealis received the command from Vespasian, and, by his bravery, propagated the terror of the Roman arms. Julius Frontinus succeeded Cerealis, both in authority and reputation. The general who finally established the dominion of the Romans in this

island, was Julius Agricola, who governed it during the reigns of Vespasian, Titus, and Domitian, and distinguished himself as well by his courage as humanity.

Agricola, who is considered as one of the greatest characters in history, formed a regular plan for subduing and civilising the island, and thus rendering the acquisition useful to the conquerors. As the northern part of the country was least tractable, he carried his victorious arms thither, and defeated the undisciplined enemy in every encounter. He pierced into the formerly inaccessible forests and mountains of Caledonia; he drove onward all those fierce and intractable spirits who preferred famine to slavery, and who, rather than submit, chose to remain in perpetual hostility. Nor was it without opposition that he thus made his way into a country rude and impervious by nature. He was opposed by Galgacus at the head of a numerous army,
[84.] whom he defeated in a decisive action, in which considerable numbers were slain. Being thus successful, he did not think proper to pursue the enemy into their retreats; but, embarking a body of troops on board his fleet, he ordered the commander to surround the whole coast of Britain, which had not been discovered to be an island till the preceding year. This armament, pursuant to his orders, steered to the northward, and there subdued the Orkneys; then making the tour of the whole island, it arrived in the port of Sandwich, without having met with the least disaster.

During these military enterprises, Agricola was

ever attentive to the arts of peace. He attempted to humanise the fierceness of those who acknowledged his power, by introducing the Roman laws, habits, manners, and learning. He taught them to desire and raise all the conveniences of life, instructed them in the arts of agriculture, and, in order to protect them in their peaceable possessions, he drew a rampart, and fixed a train of garrisons, between them and their northern neighbours; thus cutting off the ruder and more barren parts of the island, and securing the Roman province from the invasion of a fierce and necessitous enemy. In this manner the Britons, being almost totally subdued, now began to throw off all hopes of recovering their former liberty; and, having often experienced the superiority of the Romans, consented to submit, and were content with safety. From that time the Romans seemed more desirous of securing what they possessed than of making new conquests; and were employed rather in repressing than punishing their restless northern invaders.

For several years after the time of Agricola, a profound peace seems to have prevailed in Britain; and little mention is made of the affairs of the island by any historian. The only incidents which occur, are some seditions among the Roman legions quartered there, and some usurpations of the imperial dignity by the Roman governors. The natives remained totally subdued and dispirited: the arts of luxury had been introduced among them, and seemed to afford a wretched compensation for their former independence. All the men who had a passion for liberty were long since de-

stroyed; the flower of their youth were draughted out of the island to serve in foreign wars; and those who remained, were bred up in servitude and submission. Such, therefore, were very unlikely to give any disturbance to their governors; and, in fact, instead of considering their yoke as a burthen, they were taught to regard it as their ornament and protection. Indeed, nothing was likely to shake the power of Rome in the island, but the dissensions and distresses of the Romans themselves; and that dreadful period at last arrived.

Rome, that had for many ages given laws to nations, and diffused slavery and oppression over the known world, at length began to sink under her own magnificence. Mankind, as if by a general consent, rose up to vindicate their natural freedom; almost every nation asserting that independence of which they had been long so unjustly deprived. It was in these turbulent times that the emperors found themselves obliged to recruit their legions from the troops that were placed to defend the frontier provinces. When the heart of the empire was contended for, it was not much considered in what manner the extremities were to be defended. In this manner the more distant parts of the empire were frequently left without a guard; and the weakness of the government there frequently excited fresh insurrections among the natives. These, with a thousand other calamities, daily grew greater; and, as the enemies of the Roman people increased, their own dissensions among each other seemed to increase in the same proportion.

During these struggles the British youth were frequently drawn away into Gaul, to give ineffectual succour to the various contenders for the empire, who, failing in every attempt, only left the name of tyrants behind them. In the mean time, as the Roman forces decreased in Britain, the Picts and Scots continued still more boldly to infest the northern parts; and crossing the friths, which the Romans could not guard, in little wicker boats, covered with leather, filled the country, wherever they came, with slaughter and consternation. When repulsed by superior numbers, as was at first always the case, they retired with the spoil, and watched for the next opportunity of invasion, when the Romans were drawn into the remoter parts of the island.

These enterprises were often repeated, and as often repressed, but still with diminishing vigour on the side of the defendants. The southern natives being accustomed to have recourse to Rome, as well for protection as for laws, made supplications to the emperors, and had one legion sent over for their defence. This relief was, in the beginning, attended with the desired effect; the barbarous invaders were driven back to their native deserts and mountains. They returned, however, when the Roman forces were withdrawn; and although they were again repulsed by the assistance of a legion once more sent from Rome, yet they too well perceived the weakness of the enemy, and their own superior force.

At length, in the reign of Valentinian the Younger, the empire of Rome began to tremble for its capi-

tal; and its rulers, being fatigued with distant expeditions, informed the wretched Britons, whom their own arts had enfeebled, that they were now no longer to expect foreign protection. They accordingly drew away from the island all the Romans, and many of the Britons who were fit for military services. Thus, taking their last leave of the island, they left the natives to the choice of their own government and kings. They gave them the best instructions the calamitous times would permit, for exercising their arms, and repairing their ramparts. They helped the natives to erect anew a wall of stone, built by the emperor Severus across the island, which they had not at that time artisans skilful enough among themselves to repair. Having thus prepared for their departure in a friendly manner, the Romans left the island, never more to return, after having been masters of it during the course of near four centuries.

It may be doubted whether the arts which the Romans planted among the islanders were not rather prejudicial than serviceable to them, as they only contributed to invite the invader, without furnishing the means of defence. If we consider the many public ways, and villas of pleasure, that were then among them, the many schools instituted for the instruction of youth, the numberless coins, statues, tessellated pavements, and other curiosities, that were common at that time, we have no doubt that the Britons made a very considerable progress in the arts of peace, although they declined in those of war. But, perhaps, an attempt at once to introduce these advantages will ever be ineffectual. The arts

of peace and refinement must rise by slow degrees in every country; and can never be propagated with the same rapidity by which new governments may be introduced. It will take, perhaps, a course of some centuries before a barbarous people can entirely adopt the manners of their conquerors; so that all the pains bestowed by the Romans in educating the Britons, only served to render them a more desirable object of invasion, and dressed them up as victims for succeeding slaughter.

CHAPTER III.

The BRITONS *and* SAXONS.

Circ. 430.

THE Britons being now left to themselves, considered their new liberties as their greatest calamity. They had been long taught to lean upon others for support; and, that now taken away, they found themselves too feeble to make any opposition. Far from practising the lessons they had received from the Romans, they aggravated their misfortunes with unavailing complaints, which only served to render them still more contemptible. Unaccustomed both to the perils of war and to the cares of civil government, they found themselves incapable of forming or executing any measures for resisting the incursions of their barbarous invaders. Though the Roman soldiers were drawn away, their families and descendants were still spread over the face of the country, and left without a single person of conduct or courage to defend them. To complete the measure of their wretchedness, the few men of any note who remained among them were infected with the ambition of being foremost in command; and, disregarding the common enemy, were engaged in dissensions among each other.

In the mean time the Picts and Scots, uniting together, began to look upon Britain as their own,

and attacked the northern wall with redoubled forces. This rampart, though formerly built of stone, had been some time before repaired with sods; and, consequently, was ill fitted to repress the attacks of a persevering enemy. The assailants therefore were not at the trouble of procuring military engines or battering-rams to overthrow it, but with iron hooks pulled down the inactive defenders from the top, and then undermined the fortification at their leisure. Having thus opened to themselves a passage, they ravaged the whole country with impunity, while the Britons sought precarious shelter in their woods and mountains.

In this exigence the unhappy Britons had a third time recourse to Rome, hoping to extort by importunity that assistance which was denied upon prudential motives. Aëtius, the renowned general of Valentinian, had, about that time, gained considerable advantages over the Goths, and seemed to give fresh hopes of restoring the Roman empire. It was to him they applied for succour, in a strain of the most abject solicitation. "The Barbarians," said they, "on the one hand, drive us into the sea; the sea, on the other, drives us back upon the Barbarians. We have only the hard choice left us, of perishing by the sword, or being drowned in the deep." Such, however, were the calamities of the Romans themselves, surrounded as they were by myriads of savage nations that they could yield no assistance to such remote and unserviceable allies. [446.]

The Britons, thus neglected, were reduced to despair; while, having left their fields uncultivated,

they began to find the miseries of famine added to the horrors of war. It happened, however, that the Barbarians themselves began to feel the same inconveniences in a country which they had ravaged: and being harassed by the irruptions of the Britons, as well as the want of necessaries, they were obliged to retreat from the southern parts of the kingdom laden with spoil.

The enemy having thus left the country open, the Britons joyfully issued from their mountains and forests, and pursued once more their usual arts of husbandry, which were attended with such abundance in the succeeding season, that they soon forgot all their past miseries. But it had been happy for them if plenty had not removed one evil to plant another. They began, from a state of famine, to indulge themselves in such riot and luxury, that their bodies were totally enervated, and their minds debauched.

Thus, entirely occupied in the enjoyment of the present interval of peace, they made no provision for resisting the enemy, who were only taking breath to renew their former invasions. Christianity, indeed, had been introduced among them some time before, though at what period is not certainly known: however, to the other calamities of the state were added also their disputes in theology. The disciples of Pelagius, who was a native of Britain, had increased in a great degree; and the clergy, who considered his opinions as heretical, were more solicitously employed in resisting them than in opposing the common enemy. Besides all these calamities, a terrible pestilence visited the southern parts of the

island, which thinned its inhabitants, and totally deprived them of all power of resistance.

It was in this deplorable and enfeebled state that the Britons were informed of fresh preparations for an invasion from their merciless northern neighbours. To oppose their progress, they pitched upon Vortigern as their general and sovereign; a prince who is said to have raised himself to the supreme command by the murder of his predecessor. This step was only productive of fresh calamities. Vortigern, instead of exerting what strength yet remained in the kingdom, only set himself to look about for foreign assistance; and the Saxons appeared to him at once the most martial, and the most likely to espouse his interests.

The Saxons were one branch of those Gothic nations which, swarming from the northern hive, came down to give laws, manners, and liberty, to the rest of Europe. A part of this people, under the name of Suevi, had, some time before Cæsar's invasion of Gaul, subdued and possessed an extensive empire in Germany. These, for their strength and valour, were formidable to all the German tribes. They were afterwards divided into several nations, and each became famous for subduing that country which was the object of its invasion. France, Germany, and England, were among the number of their conquests.

There is a period between savage rudeness and excessive refinement, which seems peculiarly adapted for the purpose of war, and which fits mankind for great achievements. In this state of half-refinement, when compared to the Britons,

were the Saxons at the time their assistance was thought necessary. They dressed with some degree of elegance, which the generality of the Britons, even though so long under the institutions of the Romans, had not yet learned to practise. Their women used linen garments trimmed and striped with purple. Their hair was bound in wreaths, or fell in curls upon their shoulders; their arms were bare, and their bosoms uncovered;—fashions which, in some measure, seem peculiar to the ladies of England to this day. Their government was generally an elective monarchy, and sometimes a republic. Their commanders were chosen for their merit, and dismissed from duty when their authority was no longer needful. The salaries they were supplied with seldom exceeded a bare subsistence; and the honours they received were the only reward of their superior dangers and fatigues. The custom of trying by twelve men is of Saxon original: slavery was unknown among them, and they were taught to prefer death to a shameful existence. We are told by Marcellinus, that a body of them being taken prisoners, were kept for exhibition on the amphitheatre at Rome, as gladiators, for the entertainment of the people. The morning however on which they were expected to perform, they were every one found dead in his cell, each choosing rather a voluntary death than to be the ignominious instruments of brutal pleasure to their conquerors. The chastity of this people is equally remarkable; and to be without children was to be without praise. But their chief excellence, and

what they most gloried in, was their skill in war. They had, in some measure, learned discipline from the Romans, whom they had often defeated; and had, for a century and a half before, made frequent descents upon the coasts of Britain for the sake of plunder. They were, therefore, a very formidable enemy to the Romans when settled there; and an officer was appointed to oppose their inroads, under the title of the "Count of the Saxon shore." Thus, ever restless and bold, they considered war as their trade, and were, in consequence, taught to consider victory as a doubtful advantage, but courage as a certain good. A nation, however, entirely addicted to war, has seldom wanted the imputation of cruelty, as those terrors which are opposed without fear are often inflicted without regret. The Saxons are represented as a very cruel nation; but we must remember that their enemies have drawn the picture.

It was upon this people that Vortigern turned his eyes for succour against the Picts and Scots, whose cruelties, perhaps, were still more flagrant. It certainly was not without the most pressing invitations that the Saxons deigned to espouse their cause; and we are yet in possession of the form of their request, as left us by Witichindus, a contemporary historian of some credit: "The poor and distressed Britons, almost worn out by hostile invasions, and harassed by continual incursions, are humble supplicants to you, most valiant Saxons, for succour. We are possessed of a wide-extended and a fertile country; this we yield wholly to be at your devotion [449.]

and command. Beneath the wings of your valour we seek for safety, and shall willingly undergo whatever services you may hereafter be pleased to impose."

It was no disagreeable circumstance to these conquerors, to be thus invited into a country upon which they had, for ages before, been forming designs. In consequence therefore of Vortigern's solemn invitation, they arrived with fifteen hundred men, under the command of Hengist and Horsa, who were brothers, and landed on the isle of Thanet. There they did not long remain inactive; but, being joined by the British forces, they boldly marched against the Picts and Scots, who had advanced as far as Lincolnshire, and soon gained a complete victory over them.

Hengist and Horsa possessed great credit among their countrymen at home, and had been much celebrated for their valour and the splendour of their descent. They were believed to be sprung from Woden, who was worshipped as a god among this people, and were said to be no more than the fourth in descent from him. This report, how fabulous soever, did not a little contribute to increase their authority among their associates; and being sensible of the fertility of the country to which they came, and the barrenness of that which they had left behind, they invited over great numbers of their countrymen to become sharers in their new expedition. It was no difficult matter to persuade the Saxons to embrace an enterprise, which promised at once an opportunity of displaying their valour and of rewarding their rapacity.

Accordingly they sent over a fresh supply of five thousand men, who passed over in seventeen vessels. [451.]

It was now, but too late, that the Britons began to entertain apprehensions of their new allies, whose numbers they found augmenting as their services became less necessary. They had long found their chief protection in passive submission; and they resolved, upon this occasion, to bear every encroachment with patient resignation. But the Saxons, being determined to come to a rupture with them, easily found a pretext, in complaining that their subsidies were ill paid, and their provisions withdrawn. They, therefore, demanded that these grievances should be immediately redressed, otherwise they would do themselves justice; and in the mean time they engaged in a treaty with the Picts, whom they had been called in to repress. The Britons, impelled by the urgency of their calamities, at length took up arms; and having deposed Vortigern, by whose counsel and vices they were thus reduced to an extremity, they put themselves under the command of Vortimer, his son. Many were the battles fought between these enraged nations; their hatred to each other being still more inflamed by the difference of their religion, the Britons being all Christians, and the Saxons still remaining in a state of idolatry. There is little to entertain the reader in the narration of battles, where rather obstinate valour than prudent conduct procured the victory; and, indeed, the accounts given us of them are very opposite, when described by British and

Saxon annalists. However, the progress the latter still made in the island sufficiently proves the advantage to have been on their side; although, in a battle fought at Eglesford, Horsa, the Saxon general, was slain.

But a single victory, or even a repetition of success, could avail but little against an enemy continually reinforced from abroad; for Hengist, now become sole commander, and procuring constant supplies from his native country, carried devastation into the most remote corners of Britain. Chiefly anxious to spread the terror of his arms, he spared neither sex, age, nor condition, but laid the country desolate before him. The priests and bishops found no protection from their sacred calling, but were slaughtered upon their altars. The people were massacred in heaps; and some, choosing life upon the most abject terms, were contented to become slaves to the victors. It was about this time that numbers deserted their native country, and fled over to Armorica, since called Britany, where they settled in great numbers, among a people of the same manners and language with themselves.

The British historians, in order to account for the easy conquest of their country by the Saxons, assign their treachery, not less than their valour, as a principal cause. They allege that Vortigern was artfully inveigled into a passion for Rowena, the daughter of Hengist; and, in order to marry her, was induced to settle upon her father the fertile province of Kent, from which the Saxons could never after be removed. It is alleged also, that,

upon the death of Vortimer, which happened shortly after the victory obtained at Eglesford, Vortigern his father was reinstated upon the throne. It is added, that this weak monarch accepting of a festival from Hengist, three hundred of his nobility were treacherously slaughtered, and himself detained as a captive.

Be these facts as they may, it is certain that the affairs of the Britons gradually declined; and they found but a temporary relief in the valour of one or two of their succeeding kings. After the death of Vortimer, Ambrosius, a Briton though of Roman descent, was invested with the command, and in some measure proved successful in uniting his countrymen against the Saxons. He penetrated with his army into the heart of their possessions; and though he fought them with doubtful advantage, yet he restored the British interest and dominion. Still, however, Hengist kept his ground in the country; and inviting over a new tribe of Saxons, under the command of his brother Octa, he settled them in Northumberland. As for himself, he kept possession of the kingdom of Kent, (comprehending also Middlesex and Essex;) fixing his royal seat at Canterbury, and leaving his new-acquired dominions to his posterity.

After the death of Hengist, several other German tribes, allured by the success of [488.] their countrymen, came over in great numbers. A body of their countrymen, under the command of Ælla and his three sons, had [477.] some time before laid the foundation of the king-

dom of the South Saxons, though not without great opposition and bloodshed. This new kingdom included Surrey, Sussex, and the New Forest; and extended to the frontiers of Kent.

Another tribe of Saxons, under the command of Cerdic and his son Kenric, landed in the West, and thence took the name of West Saxons. These met a very vigorous opposition from the natives; but, being reinforced from Germany, and assisted by their countrymen on the island, they routed the Britons: and although retarded in their progress by the celebrated king Arthur, they had strength enough to keep possession of the conquests they had already made. Cerdic, therefore, [519.] with his son Kenric, established the third Saxon kingdom in the island, namely, that of the West Saxons, including the counties of Hants, Dorset, Wilts, Berks, and the Isle of Wight.

It was in opposing this Saxon invader that the celebrated prince Arthur acquired his fame. Howsoever unsuccessful all valour might have been in the end, yet his name makes so great a figure in the fabulous annals of the times, that some notice must be taken of him. This prince is of such obscure original, that some authors suppose him to be the son of king Ambrosius, and others only his nephew; others again affirm that he was a Cornish prince, and son of Gurlois, king of that province. However this be, it is certain he was a commander of great valour; and could courage alone repair the miserable state of the Britons, his might have been effectual. According to

Nennius, and the most authentic historians, he is said to have worsted the Saxons in twelve successive battles. In one of these, namely, that fought at Caerbaden, in Berks, it is asserted that he killed no less than four hundred and forty of the enemy with his own hand. But the Saxons were too numerous and powerful to be extirpated by the desultory efforts of single valour; so that a peace only, and not conquest, resulted from his victories. The enemy, therefore, still gained ground; and this prince, in the decline of life, had the mortification, from some domestic troubles of his own, to be a patient spectator of their encroachments. His first wife had been carried off by Meluas, king of Somersetshire, who detained her a whole year at Glastonbury, until Arthur, discovering the place of her retreat, advanced with an army against the ravisher, and obliged him to give her back, by the mediation of Gildas Albanius. In his second wife, perhaps, he might have been more fortunate, as we have no mention made of her; but it was otherwise with his third consort, who was debauched by his own nephew Mordred. This produced a rebellion, in which the king and his traitorous kinsman meeting in battle, they slew each other.

In the mean time, while the Saxons were thus gaining ground in the West, their countrymen were not less active in other parts of the island. Adventurers still continuing to pour over from Germany, one body of them, under [573.] the command of Uffa, seized upon the counties of Cambridge, Suffolk, and Norfolk, and gave their

commander the title of king of the East Angles, which was the fourth Saxon kingdom founded in Britain.

Another body of these adventurers formed a kingdom under the title of East Saxony, or Essex, comprehending Essex, Middlesex, and part of Hertfordshire. This kingdom, which was dismembered from that of Kent, formed the fifth Saxon principality founded in Britain.

The kingdom of Mercia was the sixth which was established by these fierce invaders, com-
[585.] prehending all the middle counties, from the banks of the Severn to the frontiers of the two last-named kingdoms.

The seventh and last kingdom which they obtained was that of Northumberland, one of the most powerful and extensive of them all. This was formed from the union of two smaller Saxon kingdoms, the one called Bernicia, containing the present county of Northumberland and the bishopric of Durham; the subjects of the other, called the Deiri, extending themselves over Lancashire and Yorkshire. These kingdoms were united in the person of Ethelfrid, king of Northumberland, by the expulsion of Edwin, his brother-in-law, from the kingdom of the Deiri, and the seizure of his dominions.

In this manner, the natives being overpowered, or entirely expelled, seven kingdoms were established in Britain, which have been since well known by the name of the Saxon Heptarchy.—The unfortunate Britons having been exhausted by continual wars, and even worn out by their

own victories, were reluctantly compelled to forsake the more fertile parts of the country, and to take refuge in the mountainous parts of Wales and Cornwall. All the vestiges of Roman luxury were now almost totally destroyed by the conquerors, who rather aimed at enjoying the comforts of life than its magnificence. The few natives who were not either massacred or expelled their habitations, were reduced to the most abject slavery, and employed in cultivating for their new masters those grounds which they once claimed as their own.

From this time British and Roman customs entirely ceased in the island; the language, which had been either Latin or Celtic, was discontinued, and the Saxon or English only was spoken. The land, before divided into colonies or governments, was cantoned into shires, with Saxon appellations to distinguish them. The habits of the people in peace, and arms in war, their titles of honour, their laws, and methods of trial by jury, were continued as originally practised by the Germans, only with such alterations as increasing civilisation produced. Conquerors, although they disseminate their own laws and manners, often borrow from the people they subdue. In the present instance they imitated the Britons in their government, by despotic and hereditary monarchies, while their exemplary chastity, and their abhorrence of slavery, were quite forgotten.

The Saxons being thus established in all the desirable parts of the island, and having no longer the Britons to contend with, began to quarrel

among themselves. A country divided into a number of petty independent principalities must ever be subject to contention, as jealousy and ambition have more frequent incentives to operate. The wars and revolutions of these little rival states were extremely numerous, and the accounts of them have swelled the historian's page. But these accounts are so confusedly written, the materials so dry, uninteresting, and filled with such improbable adventures, that a repetition of them can gratify neither the reader's judgement nor curiosity. Instead, therefore, of entering into a detail of tumultuous battles, petty treacheries, and obscure successions, it will be more conformable to the present plan to give some account of the introduction of Christianity among the Saxons, which happened during this dreary period.

The Christian religion never suffered more persecution than it underwent in Britain from the barbarity of the Saxon pagans, who burned all the churches, stained the altars with the blood of the clergy, and massacred all those whom they found professing Christianity. This deplorable state of religion in Britain was first taken into consideration by St. Gregory, who was then pope; and he undertook to send missionaries thither. It is said, that before his elevation to the papal chair, he chanced one day to pass through the slave-market at Rome, and perceiving some children of great beauty who were set up for sale, he inquired about their country; and finding they were English pagans, he is said to have cried out, in the Latin language, *Non Angli sed Angeli forent, si essent*

Christiani—"They would not be English, but Angels, had they been Christians." From that time he was struck with an ardent desire to convert that unenlightened nation, and actually embarked in a ship for Britain; when his pious intentions were frustrated by his being detained at Rome by the populace, who loved him. He did not, however, lay aside his holy resolution; for, having succeeded to the papal chair, he ordered a monk, named Augustine, and others of the same fraternity, to undertake the mission into Britain. It was not without some reluctance that these reverend men undertook so dangerous a task; but some favourable circumstances in Britain seemed providentially to prepare the way for their arrival. Ethelbert, king of Kent, in his father's lifetime, had married Bertha, the only daughter of Caribert, king of Paris, one of the descendants of Clovis, king of Gaul. But before he was admitted to this alliance, he was obliged to stipulate that this princess should enjoy the free exercise of her religion, which was that of Christianity. She was therefore attended to Canterbury, the place of her residence, by Luidhard, a Gaulish prelate, who officiated in a church dedicated to St. Martin, which had been built by the Romans, near the walls of Canterbury. The exemplary conduct and powerful preaching of this primitive bishop, added to the queen's learning and zeal, made very strong impressions upon the king, as well as the rest of his subjects, in favour of Christianity. The general reception of this holy religion all over the continent, might also contribute to dispose the

minds of these idolaters for its admission, and make the attempt less dangerous than Augustine and his associates at first supposed.

This pious monk, upon his first landing in the Isle of Thanet, sent one of his interpreters to the Kentish king, declaring he was come from Rome with offers of eternal salvation. In the mean time he and his followers lay in the open air, that they might not, according to the belief of the times, by entering a Saxon house, subject themselves to the power of heathen necromancy. The king immediately ordered them to be furnished with all necessaries, and even visited them, though without declaring himself as yet in their favour. Augustine, however, encouraged by this favourable reception, and now seeing a prospect of success, proceeded with redoubled zeal to preach the Gospel, and even endeavoured to call in the aid of miracles to enforce his exhortations. So much assiduity, together with the earnestness of his address, the austerity of his life, and the example of his followers, at last powerfully operated. The king openly espoused the Christian religion, while his example wrought so successfully on his subjects, that numbers of them came voluntarily to be baptized, their missionary loudly declaring against any coercive means towards their conversion. The heathen temples, being purified, were changed to places of Christian worship; and such churches as had been suffered to decay, were repaired. To facilitate the reception of Christianity, the pope enjoined his missionary to remove the pagan idols, but not to throw down the altars, ob-

serving, that the people would be allured to frequent those places which they had been taught to revere. He also permitted him to indulge the people in those feasts and cheerful entertainments which they had been formerly accustomed to celebrate near the places of their idolatrous worship. The people thus exchanged their ancient opinions with readiness, since they found themselves indulged in those innocent relaxations, which are only immoral when carried to an excess. Augustine was consecrated archbishop of Canterbury, endowed with authority over all the British churches; and his associates, having spread themselves over all the country, completed that conversion which was so happily begun.

The kingdom of the heptarchy which next embraced the Christian faith was that of Northumberland, at that time more powerful than the rest. Edwin, a wise, brave, and active prince, then king of the country, was married to Ethelburga, the daughter of Ethelbert, who had been so lately converted. This princess, emulating the glory of her mother, who had been the instrument of converting her husband and his subjects to Christianity, carried Paulinus, a learned bishop, with her into Northumberland, having previously stipulated for the free exercise of her religion. Edwin, whom his queen unceasingly solicited to embrace Christianity, for a long time hesitated on the proposal, willing to examine its doctrines before he declared in their favour. Accordingly he held several conferences with Paulinus, disputed with his counsellors, meditated alone, and, after a serious dis-

cussion, declared himself a Christian. The high priest also of the pagan superstition soon after declaring himself a convert to the arguments of Paulinus, the whole body of the people unanimously followed their example.

The authority of Edwin, who was thus converted, soon after prevailed upon Earpwold, the king of the East Angles, to embrace Christianity. This monarch, however, after the death of Edwin, relapsed into his former idolatry, at the persuasion of his wife. But upon his decease, Sigebert, his half-brother, who had been educated in France, restored Christianity, and introduced learning among the Angles.

Mercia, the most powerful kingdom of all the Saxon heptarchy, owed its conversion, like the former, to a woman. The wife of Peada, who was the daughter of Oswy, king of Northumberland, having been bred in the Christian faith, employed her influence with success in converting her husband and his subjects. But it seems the new religion was attended with small influence on the manners of that fierce people, as we find Offa, one of their new-converted kings, in a few reigns after, treacherously destroying Ethelbert, king of the East Angles, at an entertainment to which he had been invited. However, to make atonement for this transgression, we find him paying great court to the clergy, giving the tenth of his goods to the church, and making a pilgrimage to Rome, where his riches procured him the papal absolution. It was upon this occasion, the better to ingratiate himself with the pope, that he engaged to

pay him a yearly donation for the support of an English college at Rome; and, in order to raise the sum, he imposed a tax of a penny on each house possessed of thirty pence a year. This imposition being afterwards generally levied throughout the kingdom, went by the name of Peter-pence, and in succeeding times gave rise to many ecclesiastical abuses.

In the kingdom of Essex, Sebert, who was nephew to Ethelbert, king of Kent, of whose conversion we have already made mention, was also prevailed upon by his uncle to embrace the Christian religion. His sons, however, relapsed into idolatry, and banished Melitus, the Christian bishop, from their territories, because he refused to let them eat the white bread which was distributed at the communion. But Christianity was restored two or three reigns after, by Sigebert the Good; and such was the influence of its doctrines upon Offa, the fourth in succession from him, that he went upon a pilgrimage to Rome, and shut himself up during the rest of his life in a cloister.

We know but little of the propagation of Christianity in the kingdom of Sussex; but this being the smallest of all the Saxon heptarchy, it is probable that it was governed in its opinions by some of its more powerful neighbours. It is said, that, during the reign of Cissa, one of its kings, which continued seventy-six years, the kingdom fell into a total dependence upon that of Wessex, and to this it is probable that it owed its conversion.

The kingdom of Wessex, which in the end swallowed up all the rest, deserves our more articular

attention. This principality, which, as has been already related, was founded by Cerdic, was, of all the Saxon establishments in Britain, the most active and warlike. The great opposition the invaders of this province originally met from the natives, whom they expelled, not without much bloodshed, served to carry their martial spirit to the highest pitch. Cerdic was succeeded by his son Kenric, and he by Ceaulin, a prince more ambitious and enterprising than either of the former. He had, by waging continual war against the Britons, added a great part of the counties of Devon and Somerset to his dominions; and, not satisfied with conquests over his natural enemies, he attacked the Saxons themselves, till, becoming terrible to all, he provoked a general confederacy against him. This combination took place; so that he was at last expelled the throne, and died in exile and misery. His two sons succeeded; and, after a succession of two more, Kynegils inherited the crown. This prince embraced Christianity through the persuasion of Oswald, the king of Northumberland, his son-in-law. After some succeeding obscure reigns, Ceadwalla mounted the throne, an enterprising, warlike, and successful prince. He subdued entirely the kingdom of Sussex, and annexed it to his own dominions. He made also some attempts upon Kent, but was repulsed with vigour. Ina, his successor, was the most renowned and illustrious of all the kings who reigned in England during the heptarchy. This monarch inherited the military virtues of Ceadwalla, but improved by policy, justice, and pru-

dence. He made war upon the Britons, who yet remained in Somersetshire; and having totally subdued that province, he treated the vanquished with a humanity hitherto unknown to the Saxon conquerors. In less than a year after he mounted the throne of Wessex, he was declared monarch of the Anglo-Saxons: a remarkable proof of the great character he had acquired. He compiled a body of laws, which served as the ground-work of those which were afterwards published by Alfred. He also assembled a general council of the clergy, in which it was determined that all churches, monasteries, and places of religious worship, which had gone to ruin or decay, should be rebuilt and repaired. At length, after a distinguished reign of thirty-eight years, in the decline of life, he made a pilgrimage to Rome; and, on his return home, shut himself up in a cloister, where he died. To him succeeded Ethelard, Cudred, Sigebert, Cenulph, and Brithric; all these claiming the crown, not entirely by hereditary right, nor yet totally rejecting their family pretensions.

It was in the reign of the last-named monarch, that Egbert, great-grandson to a nephew of king Ina, began to grow very popular among the West Saxons, both on account of his family and private merit. But sensible, however, of the danger of popularity, under such a jealous monarch as Brithric, he withdrew secretly into France, to the court of Charlemagne, at that time the most polished prince of Europe. This was a school in which young Egbert failed not to make a rapid proficiency; and he soon acquired such accomplish-

ments, both in arts and arms, as raised him greatly superior to any of his countrymen at home.

Nor was it long before this prince had an opportunity of displaying his natural and acquired talents to advantage; for, Brithric being poisoned by his wife Eadburga, the nobility recalled him from France, in order to ascend the throne of his ancestors.

[800.] About that time also, a fortunate concurrence of events seemed to prepare the way for his becoming sole monarch of the country. In all the kingdoms of the heptarchy, an exact rule of succession was little regarded; while, at the same time, family pretensions were not laid totally aside. Every person of the collateral line had as good a right to assert his claim as those who urged direct descent; so that the reigning monarch was under continual apprehensions from the princes of the blood, whom he was taught to consider as rivals, and whose death alone could ensure him tranquillity. From this fatal cause, together with the passion princes then had of retiring to monasteries, and the opinion of merit attending the preservation of chastity, even in a married state; from these causes, I say, the royal families had been entirely extinguished in all the kingdoms except that of Wessex. Thus Egbert was the only surviving descendant of those conquerors who boasted their descent from Woden; and consequently, beside his personal merit, he had hereditary pretensions to the throne of the united kingdoms.

It is indeed probable, that he had already

planned the union of the heptarchy; but, in order to avert the suspicions of the neighbouring states, he attacked the Britons in Cornwall, and continued to act as mediator among the Saxon princes, whose differences were become almost irreconcilable. His moderation in these good offices, the prudence he manifested in his own government, and his known capacity in the affairs of war and peace, procured him such a degree of reputation that he was soon considered as chief of the Saxon heptarchy.

But his ambition was not to be satisfied with a mere nominal superiority; he still aimed at breaking down all distinctions, and uniting these petty states into one great and flourishing kingdom. The king of Mercia was the first who furnished him with a pretext for recovering the part of his dominions which had formerly been dismembered by that state. Beornulf, the monarch of that country, who had already almost obtained the sovereignty over the heptarchy, taking advantage of Egbert's absence, who was employed in quelling the Britons, invaded his dominions with a numerous army, composed of the flower of his country. Egbert was not remiss in marching to oppose him, with a body of troops less numerous than those of Beornulf, but more brave and resolute. Both armies met at Wilton, and a battle ensuing, the Mercians were defeated with terrible slaughter.

In the mean time, while the victor pursued his conquest into the enemy's country, he dispatched his eldest son, Ethelwolf, with an army, into the kingdom of Kent, who soon made himself master of

the whole nation, and expelled Baldred, their monarch, to whom his subjects had paid a very unwilling obedience. The East Saxons also, and part of Surrey, dissatisfied with their subjection to the Mercians, readily submitted to Egbert; nor were the East Angles backward in sending ambassadors to crave his protection and assistance against that nation, whose yoke they had for some time endured, and were resolved no longer to bear. The Mercian king, attempting to repress their defection, was defeated and slain: and two years after, Ludecan, his successor, met with the same fate. Withlaf, one of their eoldermen, soon after put himself at their head; but, being driven from province to province by the victorious arms of Egbert, he was, at last, obliged to take shelter in the abbey of Croyland, while Egbert made himself master of the whole kingdom of Mercia. However, in order to accustom that people to his dominion, he permitted Withlaf to govern the kingdom as a vassal, and tributary under him; thus at once satisfying his ambition, and flattering the people with an appearance of the former government.

The king of Northumberland was the last that submitted to his authority. This state had been long harassed by civil wars and usurpations: all order had been destroyed among the people, and the kingdom was weakened to such a degree, that it was in no condition to withstand such an invader as Egbert. The inhabitants, therefore, unable to resist his power, and desirous of possessing some established form of government, very cheerfully sent deputies, who submitted to his authority, and ex-

pressed their allegiance to him as their sovereign. By this submission, all the kingdoms of the heptarchy were united under his command; but, to give splendour to his authority, a general council of the clergy and laity was summoned at Winchester, where he was solemnly crowned king of England, by which name the united kingdom was thenceforward called.

Thus about four hundred years after the first arrival of the Saxons in Britain, all their petty settlements were united into one great state, and nothing offered but prospects of peace, security, and increasing refinement. [827.] About this period, the arts and sciences, which had been before only known to the Greeks and Romans, were disseminated over Europe, where they were sufficient to raise the people above mere barbarians; but yet lost all their native splendour in the transplantation. The English, at this time, might be considered as polite, if compared to the naked Britons at the invasion of Cæsar. The houses, furniture, clothes, and all the real luxuries of sense, were almost as great then as they have been since. But the people were incapable of sentimental pleasure. All the learning of the times was confined among the clergy; and little improvement could be expected from their reasonings, since it was one of their tenets to discard the light of reason. An eclipse was even by their historians talked of as an omen of threatened calamities; and magic was not only believed, but some actually believed themselves magicians. Even the clergy were not averse to these opinions, as such, in some measure, served to increase their au-

thority. Indeed, the reverence of the clergy was carried so high, that if a person appeared in a sacerdotal habit on the highway, the people flocked round him, and, with all the marks of profound respect, received every word he uttered as an oracle. From this blind attachment, the social and even the military virtues began to decline among them. The reverence towards saints and relics served to supplant the adoration of the Supreme Being. Monastic observances were esteemed more meritorious than active virtues; and bounty to the church atoned for all the violences done to society. The nobility, whose duty it was to preserve the military spirit from declining, began to prefer the sloth and security of a cloister to the tumult and glory of war; and those rewards which should have gone to encourage the soldier, were lavished in maintaining the credulous indolence of monastic superstition.

CHAPTER IV.

From the ACCESSION *of* EGBERT *to the* NORMAN CONQUEST.

IT might have been reasonably expected, that a wise and fortunate prince, at the head of so great a kingdom, and so united and numerous a people as the English then were, should not only have enjoyed the fruits of peace and quiet, but left felicity to succeeding generations. The inhabitants of the several provinces, tired out with mutual dissensions, seemed to have lost all desire of revolting: the race of their ancient kings was extinct, and none now remained but a prince who deserved their allegiance, both by the merit of his services and the splendour of his birth. Yet, such is the instability of human affairs, and the weakness of man's best conjecture, that Egbert was hardly settled on his united throne, when both he and his subjects began to be alarmed at the approach of new and unknown enemies, and the island exposed to fresh invasions.

About this time a mighty swarm of those nations who had possessed the countries bordering on the Baltic, began, under the names of Danes and Normans, to infest the western coasts of Europe; and to fill all places, wherever they came, with slaughter and devastation. These were, in fact, no other than the ancestors of the very people whom they came to despoil, and might be consi-

dered as the original stock from which the numerous colonies that infested Britain had migrated some centuries before. The Normans fell upon the northern coasts of France; the Danes chiefly levelled their fury against England, their first appearance being in 787, when Brithric was king of Wessex. It was then that a small body of them landed on the coasts of that kingdom, with a view of learning the state of the country; and, having committed some small depredations, fled to their ships for safety. About seven years after the first attempt they made a descent upon the kingdom of Northumberland, where they pillaged a monastery; but their fleet being shattered by a storm, they were defeated by the inhabitants, and put to the sword. It was not till about five years after the elevation of Egbert to the sovereignty of England, that their invasions became truly formidable. From that time they continued with unceasing ferocity, until the whole kingdom was reduced to a state of the most distressful bondage.

As the Saxons had utterly neglected their naval power since their first settlement in Britain, the Danes, who succeeded them in the empire of the sea, found no difficulty in landing upon the isle of Sheppey, in Kent, which they ravaged, returning to their ships loaden with the spoil. Their next attempt, the year ensuing, was at Charmouth, in Dorsetshire, where they landed a body of fifteen thousand men, that made good their ground against the efforts of Egbert; who, after a battle, was obliged to draw off his forces by night. Within two years after, they landed in Cornwall; and,

being joined by the Britons there, they advanced towards the borders of Devonshire, where they were totally routed by Egbert, in a pitched battle, at Hengsdown-hill, near Kellington. By this victory he secured the kingdom from invasion for some time; but his death seemed to put a period to the success of his countrymen, and to invite the enemy to renew their devastations with impunity.

He was succeeded by Ethelwolf, his son, who had neither the vigour nor the abilities of his father. This prince had been educated in a cloister, and had actually taken orders during the life of his elder brother; but upon his death he received a dispensation to quit the monkish habit, and to marry. He was scarcely settled on his throne, when a fleet of Danish ravagers, consisting of thirty-three sail, landed at Southampton; but were repulsed, though not without great slaughter on both sides. However, no defeat could repress the obstinacy, nor could any difficulties daunt the courage of these fierce invaders, who still persevered in their descents, and, year after year, made inroads into the country, marking their way with pillage, slaughter, and desolation. Though often repulsed, they always obtained their end,—of spoiling the country and carrying off the plunder. It was their method to avoid coming, if possible, to a general engagement; but scattering themselves over the face of the country, they carried away, indiscriminately, as well the inhabitants themselves as all their moveable possessions. If the military force of the country was drawn out against them, the invaders either stood their ground, if strong enough to oppose; or retreated to their ships, if

incapable of resistance. Thus, by making continual and repeated descents, every part of England was kept in constant alarm, every county fearful of giving assistance to the next, as its own safety was in danger. From this general calamity the priests and monks were no way exempted; they were rather the chief objects on whom these Danish idolaters wreaked their resentment.

In this state of fluctuating success affairs continued for some time, the English often repelling, and as often being repulsed by, their fierce invaders; till at length the Danes resolved upon making a settlement in the country, and, landing on the isle of Thanet, stationed themselves [852.] there. In this place they kept their ground, notwithstanding a bloody victory gained over them by Ethelwolf. Thence they soon after removed to the isle of Sheppey, which they considered as more convenient for their tumultuary depredations.

In the mean time Ethelwolf, the wretched monarch of the country, instead of exerting his strength to repel these invaders, was more solicitous to obey the dictates of monkish superstition. In order to manifest his devotion to the pope, he sent his son Alfred to Rome, to receive confirmation from his holiness; and, not satisfied with this testimony of his zeal, undertook a pilgrimage thither in person. He passed a twelvemonth in that city, and gained no small applause for his devotion, which he testified by his great liberality to the church. In his return home he married Judith, daughter to the emperor Charles the Bald; but,

on his landing in his own dominions, he was surprised to find his title to the crown disputed.

His second son, Ethelbald, upon the death of his elder brother, perceiving the miserable state to which the kingdom was reduced by the king's ill-timed superstitions, formed a conspiracy to expel him from the throne. The people seemed equally divided between the claims of the father and son; so that a bloody civil war seemed likely to complete the picture of the calamities of the times. A division of the kingdom at length terminated the dispute; the king was content with the eastern part of the monarchy, while his son was appointed to govern the western, which was the most powerful, and the least exposed to danger.

Having come to this agreement, a council was summoned of the states of the kingdom; and, besides the ratification of this grant, a tithe of all the produce of the land was settled upon the clergy.

Ethelwolf lived only two years after this agreement; leaving, by will, the kingdom [857.] shared between his two eldest sons, Ethelbald and Ethelbert: the west being consigned to the former, the east to the latter. The reign of Ethelbald was of no long continuance: however, in so short a space, he crowded a number of vices sufficient to render his name odious to posterity. He married Judith, his own mother-in-law; and was not without great difficulty prevailed upon to divorce her. The reign of his brother was of longer duration; and, as we are told, was in every respect

more meritorious. Nevertheless, the kingdom was still infested by the Danes, who committed great outrages.

[860.] This prince was succeeded by his brother Ethelred, a brave king, but whose valour was insufficient to repress the Danish incursions. In these exploits he was always assisted by his younger brother Alfred, afterwards surnamed the Great, who sacrificed all private resentment to the public good, having been deprived by the king of a large patrimony. It was during this prince's reign that the Danes, penetrating into Mercia, took up their winter-quarters at Nottingham; whence they were not dislodged without difficulty. Their next station was at Reading, from whence they infested the country with their excursions. The king, attended by his brother, marched at the head of the West Saxons against them: there, after many reciprocations of success, the king died of a wound which he received in battle, and left to Alfred the inheritance of a kingdom that was now reduced to the brink of ruin.

Nothing could be more deplorable than the state of the country when Alfred came to the throne. The Danes had already subdued Northumberland and East Anglia, and had penetrated into the very heart of Wessex. The Mercians were united against him; the dependence upon the other provinces of the empire was but precarious; the lands lay uncultivated, through fears of continual incursions; and all the churches and monasteries were burned to the ground. In this situation of affairs nothing appeared but objects of

terror, and every hope was lost in despair. The wisdom and virtues of one man were found sufficient to bring back happiness, security, and order; and all the calamities of the times found redress from Alfred.

This prince seemed born not only to defend his bleeding country, but even to adorn humanity. He had given very early instances of those great virtues which afterwards signalised his reign; and was anointed by pope Leo as future king, when he was sent by his father for his education to Rome. On his return from thence, he became every day more the object of his father's fond affections; and that, perhaps, was the reason why his education was at first neglected. He had attained the age of twelve before he was made acquainted with the lowest elements of literature; but hearing some Saxon poems read which recounted the praise of heroes, his whole mind was roused, not only to obtain a similitude of glory, but also to be able to transmit that glory to posterity. Encouraged by the queen his mother, and assisted by a penetrating genius, he soon learned to read these compositions, and proceeded from them to a knowledge of Latin authors, who directed his taste, and rectified his ambition.

He was scarce come to the crown when he was obliged to oppose the Danes, who had seized Wilton, and were exercising their usual ravages on the countries around. He marched against them with the few troops he could assemble on a sudden, and a desperate battle was fought, to the disadvantage of the English. But it was not in the

power of misfortune to abate the king's diligence, though it repressed his power to do good. He was in a little time enabled to hazard another engagement: so that the enemy, dreading his courage and activity, proposed terms of peace, which he did not think proper to refuse. They had by this treaty agreed to relinquish the kingdom; but, instead of complying with their engagements, they only removed from one place to another, burning and destroying wherever they came.

Alfred, thus opposed to an enemy whom no stationary force could resist, no treaty could bind, found himself unable to repel the efforts of those ravagers, who from all quarters invaded him. New swarms of the enemy arrived every year upon the coast, and fresh invasions were still projected. It was in vain that Alfred pursued them, straitened their quarters, and compelled them to treaties: they broke every league; and, continuing their attacks with unabated perseverance, at length totally dispirited his army, and induced his superstitious soldiers to believe themselves abandoned by Heaven, since it thus permitted the outrages of the fierce idolaters with impunity. Some of them therefore left their country, and retired into Wales, or fled to the continent. Others submitted to the conquerors, and purchased their lives by their freedom. In this universal defection, Alfred vainly attempted to remind them of the duty they owed their country and their king; but, finding his remonstrances ineffectual, he gave way to the wretched necessity of the times. Accordingly, relinquishing the ensigns of his dignity, and dis-

missing his servants, he dressed himself in the habit of a peasant, and lived for some time in the house of a herdsman, who had been entrusted with the care of his cattle. In this manner, though abandoned by the world, and fearing an enemy in every quarter, still he resolved to continue in his country, to catch the slightest occasions for bringing it relief. In his solitary retreat, which was in the county of Somerset, at the confluence of the rivers Parret and Thone, he amused himself with music, and supported his humble lot with the hopes of better fortune. It is said, that one day being commanded by the herdsman's wife, who was ignorant of his quality, to take care of some cakes which were baking by the fire, he happened to let them burn, for which she severely upbraided him for neglect.

Previous to his retirement, Alfred had concerted measures for assembling a few trusty friends, whenever an opportunity should offer of annoying the enemy, who were now in possession of all the country. This chosen band, still faithful to their monarch, took shelter in the forests and marshes of Somerset, and from thence made occasional irruptions upon straggling parties of the enemy. Their success, in this rapacious and dreary method of living, encouraged many more to join their society, till at length, sufficiently augmented, they repaired to their monarch, who had by that time been reduced by famine to extremities.

Mean while, Ubba, the chief of the Danish commanders, carried terror over the whole land, and now ravaged the country of Wales without

opposition. The only place where he found resistance was, in his return, from the castle of Kenwith, into which the earl of Devonshire had retired with a small body of troops. This gallant soldier finding himself unable to sustain a siege, and knowing the danger of surrendering to a perfidious enemy, resolved, by one desperate effort, to sally out and force his way through the besiegers, sword in hand. The proposal was embraced by all his followers, while the Danes, secure in their numbers, and in their contempt of the enemy, were not only routed with great slaughter, but Ubba, their general, was slain.

This victory once more restored courage to the dispirited Saxons; and Alfred, taking advantage of their favourable disposition, prepared to animate them to a vigorous exertion of their superiority. He soon therefore apprised them of the place of his retreat, and instructed them to be ready with all their strength at a minute's warning. But no one was found who would undertake to give intelligence of the forces and posture of the enemy. Not knowing, therefore, a person in whom to confide, he undertook this dangerous task himself. In the simple dress of a shepherd, with a harp in his hands, he entered the Danish camp, tried all his arts to please, and was so much admired that he was brought into the presence of Guthrum, the Danish prince, with whom he remained some days. There he remarked the supine security of the Danes, their contempt of the English, their negligence in foraging and plundering, and their dissolute wasting of such ill-gotten booty. Having

made his observations, he returned to his retreat, and, detaching proper emissaries among his subjects, appointed them to meet him in arms in the forest of Selwood,—a summons which they gladly obeyed.

It was against the most unguarded quarter of the enemy that Alfred made his most violent attack, while the Danes, surprised to behold an army of English, whom they considered as totally subdued, made but a faint resistance, notwithstanding the superiority of their number. They were routed with great slaughter: and though such as escaped fled for refuge into a fortified camp in the neighbourhood, yet, being unprovided for a siege, in less than a fortnight they were compelled to surrender at discretion. By the [879.] conqueror's permission, those who did not choose to embrace Christianity embarked for Flanders, under the command of one of their generals called Hastings. Guthrum, their prince, became a convert, with thirty of his nobles, and the king himself answered for him at the font.

Of the Danes who had enlisted with Hastings, a part returned, contrary to agreement, once more to ravage that country where they had been so mercifully spared, and, landing on the coasts of Kent, advanced towards Rochester, in hopes of surprising that city. They were soon, however, deterred from proceeding, by hearing that Alfred was upon his march to oppose them. That such depredations might be prevented for the future, this monarch equipped a strong fleet, with which he attacked and destroyed sixteen of their vessels

in the port of Harwich. There was now but the port of London open to the invaders; and as that city was weakly garrisoned, he soon reduced it to capitulation. Having augmented its fortifications, and embellished it with a number of new edifices, he delivered it in charge to his son-in-law, Ethelred, and thus secured the whole country from foreign danger.

Alfred had now attained the meridian of glory; he possessed a greater extent of territory than had ever been enjoyed by any of his predecessors; the kings of Wales did him homage for their possessions, the Northumbrians received a king of his appointing, and no enemy appeared to give him the least apprehensions, or excite an alarm. In this state of prosperity and profound tranquillity, Alfred was diligently employed in cultivating the arts of peace, and in repairing the damages which the kingdom had sustained by war. After rebuilding the cities which had been destroyed by the Danes, he established a regular militia for the defence of the kingdom. He took care that all his subjects should be armed and registered; he assigned them a regular rotation of duty; some were employed to cultivate the land, while others were appointed to repel any sudden invasion from the enemy. He took care to provide a naval force that was more than a match for the invaders, and trained his subjects as well in the practice of sailing as of naval engagements. A fleet of a hundred and twenty ships of war was thus stationed along the coasts; and being well supplied with all things necessary, both for subsistence and war, it

impressed the incursive enemy with awe. Not but that there succeeded some very formidable descents, which the king found it difficult to repress. Hastings, the Danish chieftain, in particular, appeared off the coast of Kent, [893.] with a fleet of three hundred and thirty sail; and although his forces were vigorously opposed and repulsed by the vigilance of Alfred, yet he found means to secure himself in the possession of Bamflete, near the isle of Canvey, in the county of Essex. But he was not long settled there when his garrison was overpowered by a body of the citizens of London, with great slaughter, and his wife and two sons made captives. These experienced the king's clemency; he restored them to Hastings, on condition that he should depart the kingdom. Nor were the East-Anglian Danes, or the insurgents of Northumberland, much more successful. These broke into rebellion; and, yielding to their favourite habits of depredation, embarked on board two hundred and forty vessels, and appeared before Exeter. There, however, they met a very bloody reception from Alfred; and were so discouraged, that they put to sea again without attempting any other enterprise. A third body of piratical Danes were even more unsuccessful than either of the former. Great numbers of them, after the departure of Hastings, seized and fortified Shobury, at the mouth of the Thames; and having left a garrison there, marched along the banks of the river till they came to Bodington, in the county of Gloucester, where being reinforced by a body of Welshmen, they threw up entrenchments, and pre-

pared for defence. There they were surrounded by the king's forces, and reduced to the utmost extremity. After having eaten their horses, and many of them perishing with hunger, they made a desperate sally, in which numbers were cut to pieces. Those who escaped, being pursued by the vigilance of Alfred, were finally dispersed or totally destroyed. Nor did he treat the Northumbrian freebooters with less severity. Falling upon them while they were exercising their ravages in the West, he took twenty of their ships; and having tried all the prisoners at Winchester, he hanged them as pirates, and as the common enemies of mankind.

Having by this vigilance and well-timed severity given peace and total security to his subjects, his next care was to polish the country by arts, as he had protected it by arms. He is said to have drawn up a body of laws; but those which remain to this day under his name seem to be only the laws already practised in the country by his Saxon ancestors, and to which, probably, he gave his sanction. The trial by juries, mulcts and fines for offences, by some ascribed to him, are of much more ancient date. The care of Alfred for the encouragement of learning did not a little tend to improve the morals and restrain the barbarous habits of the people. When he came to the throne, he found the English sunk into the grossest ignorance and barbarism, proceeding from the continued disorders of the government, and from the ravages of the Danes. He himself complains, that, on his accession, he knew not one person south of the Thames who could so much as interpret the Latin service. To remedy this

deficiency, he invited over the most celebrated scholars from all parts of Europe; he founded, or at least re-established, the university of Oxford, and endowed it with many privileges. He gave in his own example the strongest incentives to study. He usually divided his time into three equal portions; one was given to sleep, and the refection of his body, diet, and exercise; another to the dispatch of business; and the third to study and devotion. He made a considerable progress in the different studies of grammar, rhetoric, philosophy, architecture, and geometry. He was an excellent historian, understood music, and was acknowledged to be the best Saxon poet of the age. He left many works behind him, many of which remain to this day. He translated the Pastoral of Gregory I., Boetius *de Consolatione*, and Bede's Ecclesiastical History, into the Saxon language. Sensible that his illiterate subjects were not much susceptible of speculative instruction, he endeavoured to convey his morality by parables and stories, and is said to have translated from the Greek the Fables of Æsop. Nor did he even neglect the more mechanical arts of life. Before his time the generality of the people chiefly made use of timber in building. Alfred raised his palaces of brick, and the nobility by degrees began to imitate his example. He introduced and encouraged manufactures of all kinds; and no inventors or improvers of any ingenious art were suffered to go unrewarded. Even the elegancies of life were brought to him from the Mediterranean; and his subjects, by seeing these productions of the peaceful arts, were taught to respect the virtues of justice and industry, by

which alone they could be procured. It was after a glorious reign of twenty-nine years thus spent in the advancement of his subjects' happiness, that [901.] he died, in the vigour of his age, and the full enjoyment of his faculties, an example to princes, and an ornament to human nature. To give a character of this prince would only be to sum up those qualities which constitute perfection. Even virtues seemingly opposite were happily blended in his disposition; persevering, yet flexible; moderate, yet enterprising; just, yet merciful; stern in command, yet gentle in conversation. Nature also, as if desirous that such admirable qualities of mind should be set off to the greatest advantage, had bestowed on him all bodily accomplishments, vigour, dignity, and an engaging, open countenance. In short, historians have taken such delight in describing the hero, that they have totally omitted the mention of his smaller errors, which doubtless he must have had in consequence of his humanity.

Alfred had, by his wife Ethelswitha, the daughter of a Mercian earl, three sons and three daughters. His eldest son, Edmund, died without issue, during his father's life-time. His third son, Ethelward, inherited his father's passion for letters, and lived a private life. His second son, Edward, succeeded him on the throne.

EDWARD was scarce settled on the throne when his pretensions were disputed by Ethelward, his cousin-german, who raised a large party among the Northumbrians to espouse his cause. At first his aims seemed to be favoured by fortune; but he was

soon after killed in battle, and his death thus freed Edward from a very dangerous competitor. Nevertheless the death of their leader was not sufficient to intimidate his turbulent adherents. During the whole of this prince's reign there were but few intervals free from the attempts and insurrections of the Northumbrian rebels. Many were the battles he fought, and the victories he won; so that though he might be deemed unequal to his father in the arts of peace, he did not fall short of him in the military virtues. He built several castles, and fortified different cities. He reduced Turktul, a Danish invader, and obliged him to retire with his followers. He subdued the East Angles, and acquired dominion over the Northumbrians themselves. He was assisted in these conquests by his sister, Ethelfleda, the widow of Ethelred, earl of Mercia, who, after her husband's death, retained the government of that province. Thus, after Edward had reduced the whole kingdom to his obedience, and begun his endeavours to promote the happiness of his people, he was prevented by death from the completion of his designs.

To him succeeded ATHELSTAN, his natural son, the illegitimacy of his birth not being then deemed a sufficient obstacle to his inheriting the crown. To this prince, as to the former, there was some opposition made in the beginning. Alfred, a nobleman of his kindred, is said to have entered into a conspiracy against him, in favour of the legitimate sons of the deceased king, who were yet too young to be capable of governing themselves. Whatever his attempts might have been, he denied [925.]

the charge, and offered to clear himself of it by oath before the pope. The proposal was accepted; and it is asserted, that he had scarce sworn himself innocent, when he fell into convulsions, and died three days after. This monarch received also some disturbance from the Northumbrian Danes, whom he compelled to surrender; and resenting the conduct of Constantine king of Scotland, who had given them assistance, he ravaged that country with impunity, till at length he was appeased by the humble submissions of that monarch. These submissions, however, being extorted, were insincere. Soon after Athelstan had evacuated that kingdom, Constantine entered into a confederacy with a body of Danish pirates and some Welsh princes who were jealous of Athelstan's growing greatness. A bloody battle was fought at Brunsburg, in Northumberland, in which the English monarch was again victorious. After this success, Athelstan enjoyed his crown in tranquillity; and he is regarded as one of the ablest and most active of the Saxon kings. During his reign the Bible was translated into the Saxon language; and some alliances also were formed by him with the princes of the continent. He died at Glou- [941.] cester, after a reign of sixteen years; and was succeeded by his brother Edmund.

EDMUND, like the rest of his predecessors, met with disturbance from the Northumbrians on his accession to the throne; but his activity soon defeated their attempts. The great end, therefore, which he aimed at, during his reign, was to curb the licentiousness of this people, who offered to embrace Christianity as an atonement for their offences.

Among other schemes for the benefit of the people, he was the first monarch who, by law, instituted capital punishments in England. Remarking that fines and pecuniary mulcts were too gentle methods of treating robbers, who were, in general, men who had nothing to lose, he enacted, that in gangs of robbers, when taken, the oldest of them should be condemned to the gallows. This was reckoned a very severe law at the time it was enacted; for among our early ancestors, all the penal laws were mild and merciful. The resentment this monarch bore to men of that desperate way of living was the cause of his death. His virtues, abilities, wealth, and temperance, promised him a long and happy reign; when, on a certain day, as he was solemnizing a festival in Gloucestershire, he remarked that Leolf, a notorious robber whom he had sentenced to banishment, had yet the boldness to enter the hall where he was dining, and to sit at the table among the royal attendants. Enraged at this insolence, he commanded him to leave the room; but on his refusing to obey, the king, whose temper was naturally choleric, flew against him, and caught him by the hair. The ruffian, giving way to rage also on his side, drew a dagger, and, lifting his arm, with a furious blow stabbed the monarch to the heart, who fell down on the bosom of his murderer. The death of the assassin, who was instantly cut in pieces, was but a small compensation for the loss of a king, loved by his subjects, and deserving their esteem.

The late king's sons were too young to succeed him in the direction of so difficult a government as

that of England: his brother EDRED was therefore appointed to succeed; and, like his predecessors, this monarch found himself at the head of a rebellious and refractory people. The Northumbrian Danes, as usual, made several attempts to shake off the English yoke; so that the king was at last obliged to place garrisons in their most considerable towns, and to appoint an English governor over them, who might suppress their insurrections on the first appearance. About this time the monks, from being contented to govern in ecclesiastical matters, began to assume the direction in civil affairs; and, by artfully managing the superstitions and the fears of the people, erected an authority that was not shaken off by several succeeding centuries. Edred had blindly delivered over his conscience to the guidance of Dunstan, abbot of Glastonbury, who was afterwards canonized; and this man, under the appearance of sanctity, concealed the most boundless ambition. The monks had hitherto been a kind of secular priests, who, though they lived in communities, were neither separated from the rest of the world, nor useless to it. They were often married; they were assiduously employed in the education of youth, and subject to the commands of temporal superiors. The celibacy of the clergy, as being a measure that would contribute to their independence, and to the establishment of the papal power in Europe, was warmly recommended by the see of Rome to ecclesiastics in general, but to the monks in particular. An opportunity of carrying this measure in England arose from the superstitious character of

Edred, and the furious zeal of Dunstan. Both lent it all the assistance in their power; and the order of Benedictine monks was established under the direction of Dunstan. Edred implicitly submitted to his directions, both in church and state; and the kingdom was in a fair way of being turned into a papal province by this zealous ecclesiastic, when he was checked in the midst of his career by the death of the king, who died of a quinsy, in the tenth year of his reign.

EDWY, his nephew, who ascended the throne, his own sons being yet unfit to govern, was a prince of great personal accomplishments and martial disposition. But he was now come to the government of a kingdom in which he had an enemy to contend with, against whom all military virtues could be of little service. Dunstan, who had governed during the former reign, was resolved to remit nothing of his authority in this; and Edwy, immediately upon his accession, found himself involved in a quarrel with the monks, whose rage neither his accomplishments nor his virtues could mitigate. He seems to have been elected by the secular priests in opposition to the monks; so that their whole body, and Dunstan at their head, pursued him with implacable animosity while living, and even endeavoured to brand his character to posterity. [955.]

This Dunstan, who makes a greater figure in these times than even kings themselves, was born of noble parents in the West; but, being defamed as a man of licentious manners in his youth, he betook himself to the austerities of a monastic life,

either to atone for his faults, or vindicate his reputation. He secluded himself entirely from the world, in a cell so small that he could neither stand erect nor lie along in it. It was in this retreat of constant mortification that his zeal grew furious, and his fancy teemed with visions of the most extravagant nature. His supposed illuminations were frequent; his temptations strong, but he always resisted with bravery. The devil, it was said, one day paid him a visit in the shape of a fine young woman; but Dunstan, knowing the deceit, and provoked at his importunity, seized him by the nose with a pair of red-hot pincers, as he put his head into the cell; and he held him there till the malignant spirit made the whole neighbourhood resound with his bellowings. Nothing was too absurd for the monks to propagate in favour of their sect. Crucifixes, altars, and even horses, were heard to harangue in their defence against the secular clergy. These miracles, backed by their stronger assertions, prevailed with the people. Dunstan was considered as the peculiar favourite of the Almighty, and appeared at court with an authority greater than that of kings; since theirs was conferred by men, but his allowed by Heaven itself. Being possessed of so much power, it may be easily supposed that Edwy could make but a feeble resistance; and that his first fault was likely to be attended with the most dangerous consequences. The monk found or made one on the very day of his coronation. There was a lady of the royal blood, named Elgiva, whose beauty had made a strong impression on this young monarch's

heart. He had even ventured to marry her, contrary to the advice of his counsellors, as she was within the degrees of affinity prohibited by the canon law. On the day of his coronation, while his nobility were giving a loose to the more noisy pleasures of wine and festivity in the great hall, Edwy retired to his wife's apartment, where, in company with her mother, he enjoyed the more pleasing satisfaction of her conversation. Dunstan no sooner perceived his absence, than, conjecturing the reason, he rushed fiercely into the apartment, and upbraiding him with all the bitterness of ecclesiastical rancour, dragged him forth in the most outrageous manner. Dunstan, it seems, was not without his enemies; for the king was advised to punish this insult, by ordering him to account for the money with which he had been intrusted during the last reign. This account the haughty monk refused to give in; wherefore he was deprived of all the ecclesiastical and civil emoluments of which he had been in possession, and banished the kingdom. His exile only served to increase the reputation of his sanctity among the people; and Odo, archbishop of Canterbury, was so far transported with the spirit of the party, that he pronounced a divorce between Edwy and Elgiva. Ecclesiastical censures were then attended with the most formidable effects. The king could no longer resist the indignation of the church, but consented to surrender his beautiful wife to its fury. Accordingly, Odo sent into the palace a party of soldiers, who seized the queen, and, by his orders, branded her on the face with a hot iron. Not contented with this

cruel vengeance, they carried her by force into Ireland, and there commanded her to remain in perpetual exile. This injunction, however, was too distressing for that faithful woman to comply with; for, being cured of her wound, and having obliterated the marks which had been made to deface her beauty, she ventured to return to the king, whom she still regarded as her husband. But misfortune still continued to pursue her. She was taken prisoner by a party whom the archbishop had appointed to observe her conduct, and was put to death in the most cruel manner. The sinews of her legs being cut, and her body mangled, she was thus left to expire in the most cruel agony. In the mean time a secret revolt against Edwy became almost general; and that it might not be doubted at whose instigation this revolt was undertaken, Dunstan returned to England, and put himself at the head of the party. The malcontents at last proceeded to open rebellion: and having placed Edgar, the king's younger brother, a boy of thirteen years of age, at their head, they soon put him in possession of all the northern parts of the kingdom. Edwy's power, and the number of his adherents, every day declining, he was at last obliged to consent to a partition of the kingdom; but his death, which happened two years after, freed his enemies from all further inquietude, and gave Edgar peaceable possession of the government.

[959.] EDGAR, being placed on the throne by the influence of the monks, affected to be entirely guided by their directions in all his succeeding transactions. There has ever been some po-

pular cry, some darling prejudice amongst the English; and he who has taken the advantage of it, has always found it of excellent assistance to his government. The sanctity of the monks was the cry at that time; and Edgar, chiming in with the people, at once promoted their happiness and his own glory. Few English monarchs have reigned with more fortune or more splendour than he. He not only quieted all domestic insurrections, but repressed all foreign invasions; and his power was so well established, and so widely extended, that he is said to have been rowed in his barge by eight tributary kings upon the river Dee. The monks whom he promoted are loud in his praise; and yet the example of his continence was no ways corresponding with that chastity and forbearance on which they chiefly founded their superior pretensions to sanctity. It is, indeed, somewhat extraordinary, that one should have been extolled for his virtues by the monks, whose irregularities were so peculiarly opposite to the tenets they enforced. His first transgression of this kind was the breaking into a convent, carrying off Editha, a nun, by force, and even committing violence on her person. For this act of sacrilege and barbarity, no other penance was enjoined than that he should abstain from wearing his crown for seven years. As for the lady herself, he was permitted to continue his intercourse with her without scandal. There was another mistress of Edgar's, named Elfleda the Fair, with whom he formed a connexion by a kind of accident; for, being at the house of one of his nobles, and fixing his affections on the nobleman's

daughter, he privately requested that the young lady should pass that very night with him. The lady's mother, knowing his power, and the impetuosity of his temper, prevailed upon her daughter seemingly to comply with his request; but, in the mean time, substituted a beautiful domestic in the young lady's place. In the morning, when the king perceived the deceit, instead of being displeased at the stratagem, he expressed pleasure in the adventure; and transferring his love to Elfleda, as the damsel was called, she became his favourite mistress, and maintained an ascendency over him till his marriage with Elfrida. The story of this lady is too remarkable to be passed over in silence.

Edgar had long heard of the beauty of a young lady, whose name was Elfrida, daughter to the earl of Devonshire: but, unwilling to credit common fame in this particular, he sent Athelwold, his favourite friend, to see, and inform him, if Elfrida was indeed that incomparable woman report had described her. Athelwold, arriving at the earl's castle, had no sooner cast his eyes upon that nobleman's daughter than he became desperately enamoured of her himself. Such was the violence of his passion, that, forgetting his master's intentions, he solicited only his own interests, and demanded for himself the beautiful Elfrida from her father in marriage. The favourite of a king was not likely to find a refusal; the earl gave his consent, and their nuptials were performed in private. Upon his return to court, which was shortly after, he assured the king that her riches alone and her high quality had been the causes of her admiration; and he ap-

peared amazed how the world could talk so much, and so unjustly, of her charms. The king was satisfied, and no longer felt any curiosity, while Athelwold secretly triumphed in his address. When he had, by this deceit, weaned the king from his purpose, he took an opportunity, after some time, of turning the conversation on Elfrida, representing that though the fortune of a daughter of the earl of Devonshire would be a trifle to a king, yet it would be an immense acquisition to a needy subject. He, therefore, humbly entreated permission to pay his addresses to her, as she was the richest heiress in the kingdom. A request so seemingly reasonable was readily complied with: Athelwold returned to his wife, and their nuptials were solemnized in public. His greatest care, however, was employed in keeping her from court; and he took every precaution to prevent her appearing before a king so susceptible of love, whilst he was so capable of inspiring that passion. But it was impossible to keep his treachery long concealed. Favourites are never without private enemies, who watch every opportunity of rising upon their ruin. Edgar was soon informed of the whole transaction; but, dissembling his resentment, he took occasion to visit that part of the country where this miracle of beauty was detained, accompanied by Athelwold, who reluctantly attended him thither. Upon coming near the lady's habitation, he told him that he had a curiosity to see his wife, of whom he had formerly heard so much, and desired to be introduced as his acquaintance. Athelwold, thunder-struck at the proposal, did all in his power, but in vain, to dis-

suade him. All he could obtain, was permission to go before, on pretence of preparing for the king's reception. On his arrival he fell at his wife's feet, confessing what he had done to be possessed of her charms, and conjuring her to conceal, as much as possible, her beauty from the king, who was but too susceptible of its power. Elfrida, little obliged to him for a passion that had deprived her of a crown, promised compliance; but, prompted either by vanity or revenge, adorned her person with the most exquisite art, and called up all her beauty on the occasion. The event answered her expectations: the king no sooner saw than he loved her, and was instantly resolved to obtain her. The better to effect his intentions, he concealed his passion from the husband, and took leave with a seeming indifference; but his revenge was not the less certain and fatal. Athelwold was some time after sent into Northumberland, upon pretence of urgent affairs, and was found murdered in a wood by the way. Some say he was stabbed by the king's own hand; some, that he only commanded the assassination: however this be, Elfrida was invited soon after to court, by the king's own order, and their nuptials were performed with the usual solemnity.

Such was the criminal passion of a monarch, whom the monks have thought proper to represent as the most perfect of mankind. His reign was successful, because it was founded upon a compliance with the prejudices of the people; but it produced very sensible evils, and these fell upon his successor. He died after a reign of sixteen years, in the thirty-second year of his age, being suc-

ceeded by his son Edward, whom he had by his first marriage with the daughter of earl Ordmer.

EDWARD, surnamed the MARTYR, was made king by the interest of the monks, and lived but four years after his accession. In his reign there is nothing remarkable, if we except his tragical and memorable end. Though this young monarch had been from the beginning opposed by Elfrida, his step-mother, who seems to have united the greatest deformity of mind with the highest graces of person, yet he ever showed her marks of the strongest regard, and even expressed, on all occasions, the most tender affection for her son, his brother. Hunting one day near Corfe-castle, where Elfrida resided, he thought it his duty to pay her a visit, although he was not attended by any of his retinue. There desiring some liquor to be brought him, as he was thirsty, while he was yet holding the cup to his head, one of Elfrida's domestics, instructed for that purpose, stabbed him in the back. The king, finding himself wounded, put spurs to his horse; but, fainting with the loss of blood, he fell from the saddle, and his foot sticking in the stirrup, he was dragged along by his horse till he was killed. Being tracked by the blood, his body was found, and privately interred at Wareham by his servants. [975.]

ETHELRED the Second, the son of Edgar and Elfrida, succeeded; a weak and irresolute monarch, incapable of governing the kingdom, or providing for its safety. After a train of dissensions, follies, and vices, which seem to have marked some of the former reigns, it is not surprising that the country was weakened; and the [979.]

people, taught to rely entirely on preternatural assistance, were rendered incapable of defending themselves. During this period, therefore, their old and terrible enemies, the Danes, who seem not to have been loaded with the same accumulation of vice and folly, were daily gaining ground. The weakness and the inexperience of Ethelred appeared to give a favourable opportunity for renewing their depredations; and accordingly they landed on several parts of the coasts, spreading their usual terror and devastation. The English, ill provided to oppose such an enemy, made but a feeble resistance; endeavouring, by treachery and submission, to avert the storm they had not spirit to oppose.

The northern invaders, now well acquainted with the defenceless condition of England, made a powerful descent, under the command of Sweyn king of Denmark, and Olave king of Norway, who, sailing up the Humber, committed on all sides their destructive ravages. The English opposed them with a formidable army, but were repulsed with great slaughter. The Danes, encouraged by this success, marched boldly into the heart of the kingdom, filling all places with the marks of horrid cruelty. Ethelred had, upon a former invasion of these pirates, bought them off with money; and he now resolved to put the same expedient in practice once more. He sent ambassadors, therefore, to the two kings, and offered them subsistence and tribute, provided they would restrain their ravages, and depart the kingdom. It has often been remarked, that buying off an invasion only serves to strengthen

the enemy, and to invite a repetition of hostilities. Such it happened upon this occasion: Sweyn and Olave agreed to the terms, and peaceably took up their quarters at Southampton, where the sum of sixteen thousand pounds was paid them. Olave returned to his native country, and never infested England more; but Sweyn was less scrupulous, and the composition with him gave but a short interval to the miseries of the English. [994.]

The English now found their situation truly deplorable. The weakness of the king, the divisions of the nobility, the treachery of some, and the cowardice of others, frustrated all their endeavours for mutual defence. The Danes, ever informed of their situation, and ready to take advantage of it, appeared, a short time after the late infamous composition, upon the English shore, and, rising in their demands in proportion to the people's incapacity to oppose, now demanded twenty-four thousand pounds more. This sum they also received; and this only served to stimulate their desire of fresh exactions. But they soon had a material cause of resentment given them, by which the infraction of the stipulated treaty became necessary. The Danes, as hath been already observed, had made several settlements, for many years before, in different parts of the kingdom. There, without mixing with the natives, they still maintained a peaceable correspondence and connexion among them. Their military superiority was generally acknowledged by all; and the kings of England had been accustomed to keep in pay bodies of Danish troops, whom they quartered in [1002.]

different parts of the country. These mercenaries had attained to such a height of luxury, according to the old English writers, that they combed their hair once a day, bathed themselves once a week, and, by these arts, then esteemed effeminate, had rendered themselves so agreeable to the fair sex, that they debauched the wives and daughters of the English, and had dishonoured many families. To those insults was added the treachery of their conduct upon every threatened invasion, as they still showed their attachment to their own country-men, against those among whom they were permitted to reside. These were motives sufficient, in that barbarous age, for a general massacre; and Ethelred, by a policy incident to weak princes, embraced the cruel resolution of putting them all to the sword. This plot was carried on with such secrecy, that it was executed in one day, and all the Danes in England were destroyed without mercy. But this massacre, so perfidious in the contriving, and so cruel in the execution, instead of ending the long miseries of the people, only prepared the way for greater calamities.

While the English were congratulating each other upon their late deliverance from an inveterate enemy, Sweyn king of Denmark, who had been informed of their treacherous cruelties, appeared off the western coasts with a large fleet, meditating slaughter, and furious with revenge. The English vainly attempted to summon their forces together; treachery and cowardice still operated to dispirit their troops, or to dissipate them. To these miseries a dreadful famine was added, partly from the

bad seasons, and partly from the decay of agriculture. For a while they supposed that the Danish devastations would be retarded by the payment of thirty thousand pounds, which the invaders agreed to accept; but this, as in the former cases, afforded but a temporary relief. For a while they placed some hopes in a powerful navy, which they found means to equip; but this was soon divided and dispersed, without doing them any service. Nothing therefore now remained, but their suffering the just indignation of the conqueror, and undergoing all the evils that war, inflamed by revenge, could inflict. During this period, a general consternation, together with a mutual diffidence and dissension, prevailed. Cessations from these calamities were purchased, one after another, by immense sums; but as they afforded only a short alleviation of the common distress, no other resource remained at last than that of submitting to [1013.] the Danish monarch, of swearing allegiance to him, and giving hostages as pledges of sincerity. Ethelred was obliged to fly into Normandy, and the whole country thus came under the power of Sweyn, his victorious rival.

The death of Sweyn, which happened about six weeks after, seemed to offer a favourable opportunity of restoring Ethelred to the throne, and his subjects to their liberties. Accordingly he seized it with avidity: but his misconduct was incurable; and his indolence, credulity, and cowardice, obstructed all success. At length, after having seen the greatest part of the kingdom seized by the insulting enemy, after refusing to head his troops to

oppose them, he retired to London, where he ended an inglorious reign of thirty-seven years by a natural death, leaving behind him two sons, the elder of whom, Edmund, succeeded to his crown and his misfortunes.

[1016.] EDMUND, his son and successor, received the surname of IRONSIDE, from his hardy opposition to the enemy; but this opposition seemed as ineffectual to restore the happiness of his country, as it was to continue him in the possession of the throne. He was opposed by one of the most powerful and vigilant monarchs then in Europe; for Canute, afterwards surnamed the Great, succeeded Sweyn as king of Denmark, and also as general of the Danish forces in England. The contest between these two monarchs was therefore managed with great obstinacy and perseverance: the first battle that was fought appeared indecisive; a second followed, in which the Danes were victorious: but Edmund still having interest enough to bring a third army into the field, the Danish and English nobility, equally harassed by these convulsions, obliged their kings to come to a compromise, and to divide the kingdom between them by treaty. Canute reserved to himself the northern parts of the kingdom; the southern parts were left to Edmund: but this prince being murdered about a month after the treaty by his two chamberlains, at Oxford, Canute was left in peaceable possession of the whole kingdom.

CANUTE, though he had gratified his ambition in obtaining possession of the English crown, yet was obliged at first to make some mortifying con-

cessions; and, in order to gain the affections of the nobility, he endeavoured to gratify their avarice. But as his power grew stronger, and his title more secure, he then resumed those grants which he had made, and even put many of the English nobles to death, sensible that those who had betrayed their native sovereign would never be true to him. Nor was he less severe in his exactions upon the subordinate ranks of the people, levying at one time seventy-two thousand pounds upon the country, and eleven thousand more upon the city of London only.

Having thus strengthened his new power by effectually weakening all who had wealth or authority to withstand him, he next began to show the merciful side of his character. Nor does it seem without just grounds that he is represented by some historians as one of the first characters in those barbarous ages. The invectives which are thrown out against him by the English writers seem merely the effect of national resentment, or prejudice, unsupported by truth. His first step to reconcile the English to his yoke, was, by sending back to Denmark as many of his followers as he could safely spare. He made no distinction between the English and Danes in the administration of justice, but restored the Saxon customs in a general assembly of the kingdom. The two nations thus uniting with each other, were glad to breathe for a while from the tumult and slaughter in which they had involved each other; and, to confirm their amity, the king himself married Emma, the sister of Richard, duke

of Normandy, who had ever warmly espoused the interests of the English.

Canute, having thus settled his power in England beyond the danger of a revolution, made a voyage to Denmark, as his native dominions were attacked by the king of Sweden. In this expedition Godwin, an English earl, was particularly distinguished for his valour, and acquired that fame which laid a foundation for the immense power he acquired during the succeeding reigns. In another voyage he made to Denmark, he attacked Norway; and, expelling Olave from his kingdom, annexed it to his own empire. Thus, being at once king of England, Denmark, and Norway, he was considered as the most warlike and potent prince in Europe; while the security of his power inclined his temper, which was naturally cruel, to mercy.

As his reign was begun in blood, he was, towards the end of it, willing to atone for his former fierceness by acts of penance and devotion. He built churches, endowed monasteries, and appointed revenues for the celebration of mass. He even undertook a pilgrimage to Rome, where he remained a considerable time; and, besides obtaining from the pope some privileges for the English school erected there, he engaged all the princes through whose dominions he passed, to desist from those heavy impositions which they were accustomed to exact from the English pilgrims. The piety of the latter part of his life, and the resolute valour of the former, were topics that filled the mouths of his courtiers with flattery and praise.

They even affected to think his power uncontrollable, and that all things would be obedient to his command. Canute, sensible of their adulation, is said to have taken the following method to reprove them. He ordered his chair to be set on the sea-shore while the tide was coming in, and commanded the sea to retire. "Thou art under my dominion," cried he: "the land upon which I sit is mine; I charge thee, therefore, not to approach, nor dare to wet the feet of thy sovereign." He feigned to sit some time in expectation of submission, till the waves began to surround him; then, turning to his courtiers, he observed, that the titles of lord and master belonged only to Him whom both earth and seas were ready to obey. Thus feared and respected, he lived many years honoured with the surname of Great for his power, but deserving it still more for his virtues. He died at Shaftesbury, in the nineteenth year of his reign, leaving behind three sons, Sweyn, Harold, and Hardicnute. Sweyn was crowned king of Norway; Hardicnute was put in possession of Denmark; and Harold succeeded his father on the English throne.

HAROLD, surnamed HAREFOOT, from his swiftness in running, upon his first coming [1035.] to the crown met with no small opposition from his younger brother, Hardicnute. But, by the intervention of the nobles, a compromise was made between them; by which it was agreed that Harold should have London, and all the provinces north of the Thames, while the possession of the southern parts should be ceded to Hardicnute; and, until that prince should appear in person, Emma,

his mother, should govern in his stead. But this agreement was of short duration; for, queen Emma having brought over from Normandy Edward and Alfred, descendants of the ancient Saxon kings, Alfred was invited, with the warmest professions of friendship, by Harold to London, and treacherously set upon, by his orders, on the way. Six hundred of his train were murdered in the most cruel manner; he himself was taken prisoner, and his eyes being put out, he was conducted to the monastery of Ely, where he died soon after. Edward and Emma, apprised of his fate, fled to the continent; and Harold, without resistance, took possession of the whole kingdom. He lived to enjoy the fruits of his treachery but four years; and dying, very little regretted by his subjects, he left the succession open to his brother.

[1039.] HARDICNUTE'S title was readily acknowledged, both by the Danes and the English; and, upon his arrival from the continent, he was received with the most extravagant demonstrations of joy. The ceremony of his coronation was scarce performed when he gave the first specimen of the badness of his disposition, in his impotent insults upon the body of his brother, which he ordered to be dug up, beheaded, and thrown into the Thames. When it was found some time after by a fisherman, and buried, he ordered it to be again dug up, and to be thrown into the Thames a second time. His malice, however, was in the end ineffectual; for it was again found, and buried with the greatest secrecy. Hardicnute's next act of rigorous sovereignty was the imposition of a grievous

tax for the payment of his navy; which was the more intolerable, as the nation was threatened with a famine. In these acts of severity, Godwin, duke of Wessex, who had been a vile instrument of treachery and oppression during the former reign, was assistant now. However, his base compliances did not entirely screen him from the resentment of Emma, who had the strongest reasons to believe that he was instrumental in the death of prince Alfred, her son. At her instigation, therefore, Alfric, archbishop of York, accused him of being an accomplice, and demanded justice accordingly. Godwin found means to evade the danger, by appealing to the king's avarice, and not to the justice of his cause. He presented him with a magnificent galley, curiously carved and gilded, rowed by fourscore men, each of whom wore a golden bracelet on his arm, weighing sixteen ounces. The king, softened by this present, permitted him to purge himself by oath; and Godwin very readily swore that he had no hand in the death of Alfred. This king's violence and unjust government were but of short duration. He died two years after his accession, in consequence of excess at the marriage of a Danish lord, which was celebrated at Lambeth. His death, far from being regretted by the English, became the subject of their derision, his anniversary being distinguished by the name of Hock Holiday.

EDWARD, surnamed THE CONFESSOR from his piety, had many rivals, whose claims to the crown were rather more just than his own. The direct descendants of the last Saxon monarch [1041.]

were still in being, though at the remote distance of the kingdom of Hungary. Sweyn, the eldest son of Hardicnute, was still alive, but at that time engaged in wars in Norway. It required therefore the utmost diligence in Edward to secure his claims, before either of these could come over to dispute his title. His own authority, though great in the kingdom, was not sufficient to expedite his affairs with the desired dispatch; he was therefore obliged to have recourse to Godwin, whose power was then very extensive, to second his pretensions. This nobleman, though long an enemy to his family, finding, upon the present occasion, that their interests were united, laid aside all the former animosity, and concurred in fixing him upon the throne.

The English, who had long groaned under a foreign yoke, now set no bounds to their joy, at finding the line of their ancient monarchs restored; and at first the warmth of their raptures was attended with some violence against the Danes: but the new king, by the mildness of his character, soon composed these differences, and the distinction between the two nations gradually disappeared. Thus, after a struggle of above two hundred years, all things seemed to remain in the same state in which those conflicts began. These invasions from the Danes produced no new change of laws, customs, language, or religion; nor did any other traces of their establishments seem to remain, except the castles they built, and the families that still bear their names. No further mention therefore is made of two distinct nations; for the Normans coming in soon after served to unite them into a closer union.

The first acts of this monarch's reign bore the appearance of severity, for he resumed all grants that had been made by the crown in former reigns; and he ordered his mother Emma, who was ever intriguing against him, to be shut up in a monastery. As he had been bred in the Norman court, he showed, in every instance, a predilection for the customs, laws, and even the natives of that country; and among the rest of his faults, though he had married Editha, the daughter of Godwin, yet, either from mistaken piety, or fixed aversion, during his whole reign he abstained from her bed.

However these actions might be regarded by many of the king's subjects (for they were all of a doubtful kind), certain it is that Godwin, who was long grown much too powerful for a subject, made them the pretext of his opposition. He began by complaining of the influence of the Normans in the government; and his animosities soon broke out into action. Eustace, count of Boulogne, who had married Edward's sister, arrived in England upon a visit to the king, and was received with great honour and affection. Upon his return to Dover, having sent a servant before him to bespeak lodgings in that city, a fray happened between this domestic and the townsmen, in which he lost his life. The count and his attendants attempting to take revenge, the inhabitants took arms; and both sides engaging with great fury, the count was obliged to find safety by flight, having lost about twenty of his men, and slain as many of the people. The count, exasperated at this insult, returned to the court at Gloucester, and demanded justice of the king, who very warmly

espoused his quarrel. He instantly gave orders to Godwin, in whose government Dover lay, to go immediately to the place, and to punish the inhabitants for their crime. This was a conjuncture highly favourable to the schemes of this aspiring chief; and, thinking that now was the time to ingratiate himself with the people, he absolutely refused to obey the king's command. Sensible, however, that obedience would soon be extorted, unless he could defend his insolence, he prepared for his defence, or rather for an attack upon Edward. Accordingly, under a pretence of repressing some disorders on the Welsh frontier, he secretly assembled a great army, and attempted to surprise the king, who continued, without the smallest suspicion, at Gloucester. Nevertheless, being soon informed of Godwin's treachery, his first step was privately to summon all the assistance he could, and, in the meanwhile, to protract the time by a pretended negociation. As soon as he found himself in a capacity to take the field, he changed his tone; and Godwin, finding himself unable to oppose his superior force, or to keep his army together, permitted it to disperse, and took shelter with Baldwin, earl of Flanders. His estates, which were numerous, together with those of his sons, were confiscated; and the greatness of the family seemed, for a time, to be totally overthrown.

But this nobleman's power was too strong to be shaken by so slight a blast; for, being assisted with a fleet by the earl of Flanders, he landed on the Isle of Wight, where he was joined by his son Harold, with a squadron which that nobleman had collected

in Ireland. From thence being reinforced by great numbers of his former dependants and followers, he sailed up the Thames, and, appearing before London, threw all things into confusion. In this exigence the king alone seemed resolute; but his nobility, many of whom were secretly inclined to Godwin, brought on a negociation, in which it was stipulated, that the king should dismiss all his foreign servants, the primate being among the number; and that Godwin should give hostages for his own future good behaviour. Godwin's death, which followed soon after, prevented him from reaping the fruits of an agreement, by which the king's authority was almost reduced to nothing. [1053.]

This nobleman was succeeded in his governments and offices by his son Harold, who, in his ambition, was equal to his father, but in his virtues and abilities far his superior. By a modest and gentle demeanor he acquired the good-will of Edward, or at least softened those impressions of hatred which he had long borne the whole family. He artfully insinuated himself into the affections of the people by his liberality and apparent candour, while every day he increased his power by seeming modestly to decline it. By these arts he not only supplanted Algar, duke of Mercia, whom the king raised up to rival his power, but he got his brother Tosti made duke of Northumberland, upon the death of Siward, who had long governed that province with great glory.

Harold's insinuating manners, his power, and virtues, extended and increased his popularity to such a degree, that he began to be talked of as the most proper person to succeed to the crown. But

nothing could be more ungrateful to Edward than such a desire, as he abhorred a successor from the family of Godwin. Aroused, therefore, by these rumours, he sent for his nephew Edward from Hungary, who was, in fact, the direct descendant from the ancient Saxon kings. Prince Edward [1057.] soon arrived, but was scarcely safe landed when he died, leaving his pretensions to Edgar Atheling, his son, who was too young, weak, and inactive, to avail himself of his title. The king was now therefore thrown into new difficulties. He saw the youth and inexperience of Edgar, and dreaded the immoderate ambition of Harold. He could not, without reluctance, think of increasing the grandeur of a family which had risen on the ruins of royal authority, and had been stained in the blood of his own brother. In this uncertainty he is said to have cast his eyes on William duke of Normandy, as a person fit to succeed him; but of the truth of this circumstance we must, at this distance of time, be contented to remain in uncertainty.

In the mean time Harold did not remit in obedience to the king, or his assiduities to the people; still increasing in his power, and preparing his way for his advancement, on the first vacancy, to the throne. In these aims fortune herself seemed to assist him; and two incidents, which happened about this time, contributed to fix that popularity which he had been so long eagerly in pursuit of. The Welsh renewing their hostilities under prince Griffith, were repelled by him, and rendered tributary to the crown of England. The other incident was no less honourable: his brother Tosti, who had

been appointed to the government of Northumberland, having grievously oppressed the people, was expelled in an insurrection, and Harold was ordered by the king to reinstate him in his power, and punish the insurgents. While yet at the head of an army preparing to take signal vengeance for the injury done to his brother, he was met by a deputation of the people who had been so cruelly governed. They assured him that they had no intention to rebel, but had taken up arms merely to protect themselves from the cruelty of a rapacious governor. They enumerated the grievances they had sustained from his tyranny, brought the strongest proofs of his guilt, and appealed to Harold's equity for redress. This nobleman, convinced of Tosti's brutality, sacrificed his affection to his duty; and not only procured their pardon from the king, but confirmed the governor whom the Northumbrians had chosen in his command. From that time Harold became the idol of the people; and, indeed, his virtues deserved their love, had they not been excited by ambition.

Harold, thus secure of the affections of the English, no longer strove to conceal his aims, but openly aspired at the succession. He every where insinuated, that as the heir-apparent to the crown was utterly unequal to the task of government, both from age and natural imbecility, there was no one so proper as a man of mature experience and tried integrity; he alleged, that a man born in England was only fit to govern Englishmen; and that none but an able general could defend them against so many foreign enemies as they were every day

threatened with. The people readily saw to what these speeches tended; and instead of discountenancing his pretensions, assisted them with their wishes and applause. Edward, broken with age and infirmities, his mind entirely engrossed by the visions of superstition, and warmly attached to none, saw the danger to which the government was exposed, but took feeble and irresolute steps to secure the succession. While he continued thus uncertain, he was surprised by sickness, which brought him to his end on the fifth of January, in [1066.] the sixty-fifth year of his age, and twenty-fifth of his reign.

This prince, who was reverenced by the monks, under the titles of Saint and Confessor, had but weak pretensions to either, being indolent, irresolute, and credulous. The tranquillity of his reign was owing rather to the weakness of his foreign enemies than to his own domestic strength. But, though he seemed to have few active virtues, yet he certainly had no vices of an atrocious kind; and the want of the passions, rather than their restraint, was then, as it has been long since, the best title to canonization. He was the first who, from his supposed sanctity, touched for the king's evil.

Harold, whose intrigues and virtues seemed to give a right to his pretensions, ascended the throne without any opposition. The citizens of London, who were ever fond of an elective monarchy, seconded his claims; the clergy adopted his cause; and the body of the people, whose friend he had been, sincerely loved him. Nor were the first acts of his reign unworthy of the general prejudice in his

favour. He took the most effectual measures for an impartial administration of justice; ordered the laws to be revised and reformed; and those disturbers of the public peace to be punished, who had thriven under the lenity of the last reign.

But neither his valour, his justice, nor his popularity, were able to secure him from the misfortunes attendant upon an ill-grounded title. The first symptoms of his danger came from his own brother Tosti, who had taken refuge in Flanders, and went among the princes of the continent, endeavouring to engage them in a league against Harold, whom he represented as a tyrant and usurper. Not content with this, being furnished with some ships by the earl of Flanders, he made a descent upon the Isle of Wight, which he laid under contribution, and pillaged along the coast, until he was encountered and routed by Morcar, who had been appointed to the government from which he was expelled.

But he was not yet without succour; for Harfagar, king of Norway, who had been brought over by his remonstrances, arrived with a fleet of two hundred sail at the mouth of the river Humber, where he was joined by the shattered remains of Tosti's forces. It was in vain that the earls of Mercia and Northumberland attempted to stop their progress, with a body of new-raised undisciplined troops: they were quickly routed, and York fell a prey to the enemy. Meanwhile Harold, being informed of this misfortune, hastened with an army to the protection of his people, and ex-

pressed the utmost ardour to show himself worthy of their favour. He had given so many proofs of an equitable and prudent administration, that the people flocked from all quarters to join his standard; and as soon as he reached the enemy at Stanford, he found himself in a condition of giving them battle. The action was very bloody; but the victory was decisive on the side of Harold, and ended in the total rout of the Norwegians, Harfagar their king and Tosti being slain. Those who escaped, owed their safety to the personal prowess of a brave Norwegian, who is said to have defended a bridge over the Derwent for three hours, against the whole English army; during which time he slew forty of their best men with his battle-ax: but he was at length slain by an arrow. Harold, pursuing his victory, made himself master of a Norwegian fleet that lay in the river Ouse; and had the generosity to give prince Olave, the son of Harfagar, his liberty, and allowed him to depart with twenty vessels. There had never before been in England an engagement between two such numerous armies, each being composed of no less than threescore thousand men. The news of this victory diffused inexpressible joy over the whole kingdom; they gloried in a monarch, who now showed himself able to defend them from insult, and avenge them of their invaders: but they had not long time for triumph, when intelligence was brought of a fresh invasion, more formidable than had ever been formed against England before. This was under the conduct of William, duke of

Normandy, who landed at Hastings with an army of disciplined veterans, and laid claim to the English crown. Sept. 29, 1066.

William, who was afterwards called the Conqueror, was the natural son of Robert, duke of Normandy. His mother's name was Arlette, a beautiful maid of Falaise whom Robert fell in love with as she stood gazing at the door whilst he passed through the town. William, who was the offspring of this amour, owed a part of his greatness to his birth, but still more to his own personal merit. His body was vigorous, his mind capacious and noble, and his courage not to be repressed by apparent danger. His father Robert growing old, and, as was common with princes then, superstitious also, resolved upon a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, contrary to the advice and opinion of all his nobility. As his heart was fixed upon the expedition, instead of attending to their remonstrances, he showed them his son William, whom, though illegitimate, he tenderly loved, and recommended to their care, exacting an oath from them of homage and fealty. He then put him, as he was yet but ten years of age, under the tutelage of the French king; and soon after going into Asia, whence he never returned, left young William rather the inheritor of his wishes than the crown. In fact William, from the beginning, found himself exposed to many dangers, and much opposition, from his youth and inexperience, from the reproach of his birth, from a suspected guardian, a disputed title, and a distracted state. The regency, appointed by Robert, were under great difficulties

in supporting the government against this complication of dangers: and the young prince, when he came of age, found himself reduced to a very low condition. But the great qualities which he soon displayed in the field and the cabinet gave encouragement to his friends, and struck a terror into his enemies. He on all sides opposed his rebellious subjects, and repressed foreign invaders, while his valour and conduct prevailed in every action. The tranquillity which he had thus established in his dominions induced him to extend his views; and some overtures, made him by Edward the Confessor in the latter part of his reign, who was wavering in the choice of a successor, inflamed his ambition with a desire of succeeding to the English throne. Whether Edward really appointed him to succeed, as William all along pretended, is, at this distance of time, uncertain; but it is beyond a doubt, that Harold, happening to pay a visit to the Norman coast, was induced by this prince to acknowledge his claims, and to give a promise of seconding them. This promise, however, Harold did not think proper to perform, when it stood in the way of his own ambition; and afterwards, when William objected to the breach, he excused himself, by alleging that it was extorted from him at a time when he had no power to refuse. On whatever side justice might lie, the pretext on William's part was, that he was appointed heir to the crown of England by Edward the Confessor, upon a visit he had paid that monarch during his lifetime. In consequence of these pretensions, he was not remiss, after the death of Edward, to lay in his

claims; but Harold would admit none of them, resolved to defend by his valour what his intrigues had won. William, finding that arms alone were to be the final deciders of this dispute, prepared to assert his right with vigour. His subjects, as they had long been distinguished for valour among the European nations, had at this time attained to the highest pitch of military glory. His court was the centre of politeness; and all who wished for fame in arms, or were naturally fond of adventure, flocked to put themselves under his conduct. The fame of his intended invasion of England was diffused over the whole continent; multitudes came to offer him their services in this expedition; so that he was embarrassed rather in the choice of whom he should take than in the levying his forces. The pope himself was not behind the rest in favouring his pretensions; but, either influenced by the apparent justice of his claims, or by the hopes of extending the authority of the church, he immediately pronounced Harold an usurper. He denounced excommunication against him and all his adherents; and sent the duke a consecrated banner to inspire him with confidence. With such favourable incentives, William soon found himself at the head of a chosen army of sixty thousand men, all equipped in the most warlike and splendid manner. The discipline of the men, the vigour of the horses, the lustre of the arms and accoutrements, were objects that had been scarcely seen in Europe for some ages before. It was in the beginning of summer that he embarked this powerful body on board a fleet of three hundred sail; and, after some small

opposition from the weather, landed at Pevensey, on the coast of Sussex, with resolute tranquillity. William himself, as he came on shore, happened to stumble and fall; but, instead of being discomposed at the accident, he had the presence of mind to cry out, that he thus took possession of the country. Different from all the ravagers to which England had been formerly accustomed, this brave prince made no show of invading a foreign country, but rather encamping in his own. Here he continued in a quiet and peaceable manner for about a fortnight, either willing to refresh his troops, or desirous of knowing the reception his pretensions to the crown would meet with among the people. After having refreshed his men at this place, and sent back his fleet to Normandy to leave no retreat for cowardice, he advanced along the sea-side to Hastings, where he published a manifesto, declaring the motives that induced him to undertake this enterprise.

He was soon roused from his inactivity by the approach of Harold, who seemed resolved to defend his right to the crown, and retain that sovereignty which he had received from the people, who only had a right to bestow it. He was now returning, flushed with conquest, from the defeat of the Norwegians, with all the forces he had employed in that expedition, and all he could invite or collect in the country through which he passed. His army was composed of active and valiant troops, in high spirits, strongly attached to their king, and eager to engage. On the other hand, the army of William consisted of the flower of the continent, and had

been long inured to danger. The men of Bretagne, Boulogne, Flanders, Poictou, Maine, Orleans, France, and Normandy, were voluntarily united under his command. England never before, nor ever since, saw two such armies drawn up to dispute its crown. The day before the battle, William sent an offer to Harold to decide the quarrel between them by single combat, and thus to spare the blood of thousands; but Harold refused, and said he would leave it to the God of armies to determine. Both armies, therefore, that night pitched in sight of each other, expecting the dawning of the next day with impatience. The English passed the night in songs and feasting; the Normans in devotion and prayer.

The next morning, at seven, as soon as day appeared, both armies were drawn up in array against each other. Harold appeared in the centre of his forces, leading on his army on foot, that his men might be more encouraged by seeing their king exposed to an equality of danger. William fought on horseback, leading on his army, that moved at once, singing the song of Roland, one of the famous chiefs of their country. The Normans began the fight with their cross-bows, which, at first, galled and surprised the English; and, as their ranks were close, their arrows did great execution. But soon they came to closer fight, and the English, with their bills, hewed down their adversaries with great slaughter. Confusion was spreading among the ranks, when William, who found himself on the brink of destruction, hastened, with a select band, to the relief of his forces. His presence restored the suspense of

battle; he was seen in every place endeavouring to pierce the ranks of the enemy, and had three horses slain under him. At length, perceiving that the English line continued impenetrable, he pretended to give ground; which, as he expected, drew the enemy from their ranks, and he was instantly ready to take advantage of their disorder. Upon a signal given, the Normans readily returned to the charge with greater fury than before, broke the English troops, and pursued them to a rising ground. It was in this extremity that Harold was seen flying from rank to rank, rallying and inspiring his troops with vigour; and though he had toiled all day, till near night-fall, in the front of his Kentish men, yet he still seemed unabated in force or courage, keeping his men to the post of honour. Once more, therefore, the victory seemed to turn against the Normans, and they fell in great numbers; so that the fierceness and obstinacy of this memorable battle were often renewed by the courage of the leaders, whenever that of the soldiers began to slacken. Fortune, at length, determined a victory that valour was unable to decide. Harold, making a furious onset at the head of his troops against the Norman heavy-armed infantry, was shot in the brain by an arrow; and his two valiant brothers, fighting by his side, shared the same fate. He fell with his sword in his hand, amidst heaps of slain, and, after the battle, the royal corpse could hardly be distinguished among the dead. From the moment of his death, all courage seemed to forsake the English; they gave ground on every side, and were pursued with great slaughter by the victorious Normans. Thus, after a battle which

was fought from morning till sun-set, the invaders proved successful, and the English crown became the reward of victory. There fell near fifteen thousand of the Normans, while the loss on the side of the vanquished was yet more considerable, beside that of the king and his two brothers. The next day, the dead body of Harold was brought to William, and generously restored, without ransom, to his mother.

Oct. 14, 1066.

This was the end of the Saxon government in England, which had continued for more than six hundred years. Before the time of Alfred, the kings of this race seemed totally immersed in ignorance; and, after him, taken up with combating the superstition of the monks, or blindly obeying its dictates. As for the crown, during this period, it was neither wholly elective nor yet totally hereditary, but disposed of either by the will of the former possessor, or obtained by the eminent intrigues or services of some person nearly allied to the royal family. As for the laws and customs of this race, they brought in many long in practice among their German ancestors; but they adopted also many more which they found among the Britons, or which the Romans left behind them after their abdication. They assumed, in imitation of those nations, the name of kings; and some of them took the Greek appellation of Basileus, a title unknown to the countries from which they came. Their noblemen also assumed names of Roman authority, being termed dukes or *duces;* while the lower classes of people were bought and sold with the farms they cultivated; a horrid custom, first introduced by the

Greeks and Romans, and afterwards adopted by the countries they conquered. Their canon laws also, which often controlled the civil authority, had primarily their origin in Rome; and the priests and monks, who drew them up, had generally their education there. We must not, therefore, ascribe the laws and customs which then prevailed over England, entirely to Saxon original, as many of them were derived from the Britons and Romans. But, now the Saxon monarchy was no more, all customs and laws, of whatever original, were cast down into one common mass, and cemented by those of Norman institution. The whole face of obligation was altered, and the new masters instituted new modes of obedience. The laws were improved; but the taste of the people for polite learning, arts, and philosophy, for more than four hundred years after, was still to continue the same. It appears surprising enough, in such a variety of events, such innovation in military discipline, and such changes in government, that true politeness, and what is called a taste in the arts, never came to be cultivated. Perhaps the reason may be, that, while the authority of the church continued so great, the people were afraid of any knowledge but that derived to them through their clergy; and, being secluded from the ordinary conversation of mankind, they were but indifferent judges of human nature. A monk of the tenth century, and a monk of the eighteenth century, are equally refined; and equally fit to advance those studies that give us an acquaintance with ourselves, or that tend to display the mazes of the human heart.

MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARASWATI MAHAL. THE TANJORE

CHAPTER V.

WILLIAM *the* CONQUEROR.

NOTHING could exceed the consternation of the English upon the loss of the battle of Hastings: their king slain, the flower of their nobility cut off, and their whole army dispersed or destroyed, struck them with despair. Very little seemed now remaining but a tame submission to the victor; and William, sensible of their terror, was careful not to lose the fruits of victory by delay. Accordingly, after the pursuit of the flying enemy, and a short refreshment of his own army, he set forward on the completion of his design; and, sitting down before Dover, took it after a slight resistance, and fortified it with fresh redoubts. After a short delay at this place, he advanced by quick marches towards London, where his approach served to spread new confusion. The inhabitants for some time hesitated between their terrors and their loyalty; but, casting their eyes on every side, they saw no person of valour or authority sufficient to support them in their independence. Edgar Atheling, the right heir to the crown, was a weak and feeble prince, without courage or ambition; all their other leaders were either destroyed, or too remote to lend them assistance. The clergy, who had a large share in the deliberations, declared openly for a prince whose pretensions were acknowledged, and whose arms were blessed, by the holy see. Nothing remained, but to

submit to the necessity of the times, and to acknowledge those claims which it was not in their power to oppose. As soon, therefore, as William passed the Thames at Wallingford, Stigand, the primate, made submissions to him in the name of the clergy; and before he came within sight of the city, the chief nobility, and Edgar Atheling himself, who just before had been created king, came into his camp, and declared an intention of yielding to his authority. William was glad of being thus peaceably put in possession of a throne, which several of his predecessors had not gained without repeated victories. He readily accepted the crown upon the terms that were offered him; which were, that he should govern according to the established customs of the country. William, though he had it in his power to dictate his own conditions rather than receive any, chose to have his election considered rather as a gift from his subjects than a measure extorted by him. He knew himself to be a conqueror, but was willing to be thought a legal king.

In order to give his invasion all the sanction possible, he was crowned at Westminster by the archbishop of York, and took the oath usual in the times of the Saxon and Danish kings; which was, to protect and defend the church, to observe the laws of the realm, and to govern the people with impartiality. Having thus given all possible satisfaction to the English, his next care was to reward the many brave adventurers who had followed his fortunes. He first divided the lands of the English barons who opposed him, among the Norman barons who had

assisted his enterprise; and such as he could neither supply with money nor lands, he appointed to the vacant offices of the state. But, as there were still numbers unprovided for, he quartered them on the rich abbeys of the kingdom, until better means offered for their advancement. This, which gave no small umbrage to the clergy, was but little resented by the people, who were willing to see their own burthens lightened, by having a part of them laid upon shoulders that were at that time much better able to bear them.

But what gave them great umbrage was, to see him place all real power in the hands of his own countrymen, and still to give them possession of the sword, to which he owed all his authority. He disarmed the city of London, and other places which appeared most warlike and populous, and quartered Norman soldiers in all those places where he most dreaded an insurrection. Having thus secured the government, and, by a mixture of vigour and lenity, brought the English to an entire submission, he resolved to return to the continent, there to enjoy the triumph and congratulation of his ancient subjects. Having no reason to apprehend any disturbance in his absence among the English, whose affection he had taken such pains to conciliate, he left the regency with his brother Odo bishop of Bayeux, and William Fitz-Osborne. To secure himself yet further, he resolved to carry along with him all the English noblemen from whose power or inclination he could apprehend a revolt: and, pretending to take great pleasure in their conversation, he set sail with his honourable cap-

tives for Normandy, where he was received by his natural subjects with a mixture of admiration and joy. He resided for some time at the abbey of Feschamp, where he was visited by an ambassador from the king of France, sent to congratulate him on his success. William, naturally fond of splendour, received this embassy with great state and magnificence; while his English courtiers, willing to ingratiate themselves with their new sovereign, endeavoured to outshine each other, and made a display of riches which struck foreigners with astonishment. It was probably this foolish ostentation that excited the pride of the Normans to treat men with contempt who were apparently so much above them.

In the mean time, the absence of the Conqueror in England produced the most fatal effects. His officers, being no longer controlled by his justice, thought this a fit opportunity for extortion; while the English, no longer awed by his presence, thought it the happiest occasion for vindicating their freedom. The two governors he had left behind took all opportunities of oppressing the people; either desiring to provoke them to rebellion, in order to profit by confiscations, or, in case they submitted tamely to their impositions, to grow rich without slaughter. The inhabitants of Kent, who were more immediately exposed to these outrages, having repeated their complaints and remonstrances to no purpose, at length had recourse to Eustace, count of Boulogne, who assisted them in an attack upon the garrison of Dover. But the Normans were upon their guard, and, having repulsed the assailants with some

slaughter, took the nephew of count Eustace prisoner. This miscarriage did not deter Edric the Forester from repelling the depredations of the Normans, and, in his turn, from wasting their possessions. But though these open hostilities were not very considerable, the disaffection among the English was general, and the people began too late to perceive that strength will ever give laws to justice. A secret conspiracy was therefore formed for destroying all the Normans, as the Danes had been formerly cut off; and this was prosecuted with so much animosity, that the vassals of the earl Coxo put him to death, because he refused to head them against the invaders.

William, being informed of these commotions, hastened over to England, and arrived time enough to prevent the execution of this bloody enterprise. The conspirators had already taken the resolution and fixed the day for the intended massacre, which was to be on Ash-Wednesday, during the time of divine service, when all the Normans would be unarmed, as penitents, according to the discipline of the times. But his presence quickly disconcerted all their schemes. Such of them as had been more open in their mutiny betrayed their guilt by flight; and this served to confirm the proofs of an accusation against those who remained.

From that time forward the king began to lose all confidence in his English subjects, and to regard them as inveterate and irreconcileable enemies. He had already raised such a number of fortresses in the kingdom, that he no longer dreaded the tumultuous or transient efforts of a discontented multi-

tude; he determined to treat them as a conquered nation, to indulge his own avarice, and that of his followers, by numerous confiscations, and to secure his power by humbling all who were able to make any resistance. The first signal of his arbitrary power was manifested in renewing the odious tax of Danegeld, which had been abolished by Edward the Confessor. This measure produced remonstrances, complaints, and even insurrections, in different parts of the kingdom; but William, conscious of his power, marched against such as were most formidable, and soon compelled them to implore for mercy. In this manner the inhabitants of Exeter and Cornwall excited his resentment, and experienced his lenity.

[1068.] But these insurrections were slight, compared to that in the North, which seemed to threaten the most important consequences. This was excited by the intrigues of Edwin and Morca, the two most powerful noblemen of the English race, who, joined by Blethyn prince of North Wales, Malcolm king of Scotland, and Sweyn king of Denmark, resolved to make one great effort for the recovery of their ancient liberties. But the vigour and celerity of William destroyed their projects before they were ripe for execution; for, as he advanced towards them at the head of a powerful army, by forced marches, the two earls were so intimidated, that, instead of opposing, they had recourse to his clemency, by submission. He did not think proper to reject their advances, but pardoned them without hesitation. A peace which he made with Malcolm, king of Scotland, shortly after, seemed to de-

prive them of all hopes of future assistance from without the kingdom.

But, whatever the successes of William might have been, the inhabitants, whether English or Normans, were at that time in a most dreadful situation. All the miseries that insolence on one hand, and hatred on the other; that tyranny and treason, suspicion and assassination, could bring upon a people, were there united. The Normans were seen to commit continual insults upon the English, and these vainly sought redress from their partial masters. Legal punishment being denied, they sought for private vengeance; and a day seldom passed but the bodies of assassinated Normans were found in the woods and highways, without any possibility of bringing the perpetrators to justice. Thus, at length, the conquerors themselves began again to wish for the tranquillity and security of their native country; and several of them, though intrusted with great commands, desired to be dismissed the service. In order to prevent these desertions, which William highly resented, he was obliged to allure others to stay, by the largeness of his bounties. These brought on fresh exactions, and new insurrections were the natural consequences.

The inhabitants of Northumberland, impatient of their yoke, attacked the Norman garrison in Durham, and, taking advantage of the governor's negligence, put him, with seven hundred of his men, to the sword. The Norman governor of York shared the same fate; and the insurgents, being reinforced by the Danes, and some leaders from

Scotland, attacked the castle, which was defended by a garrison of three thousand men. Mallet, its governor, that he might the better provide for its defence, set fire to some houses which lay contiguous; but the fire spreading, the whole city was quickly in flames. This proved the cause of his destruction; for the enraged inhabitants, joining in the assault, entered the citadel sword in hand, and cut off the whole garrison, without mercy. This transient gleam of success seemed to spread a general spirit of insurrection. The counties of Somerset, Dorset, Cornwall, and Devon, united in the common cause, and determined to make one great effort for the recovery of their former freedom.

William, undaunted amidst this scene of confusion, assembled his forces, and led them towards the North, conscious that his presence alone would be sufficient to repress these rude efforts of unadvised indignation. Accordingly, wherever he appeared, the insurgents either submitted or retired. The Danes were content to return, without committing any further hostilities, into Denmark. Waltheoff, who long defended York castle, submitted to the victor's clemency, and was taken into favour. Edric, another nobleman, who commanded the Northumbrians, made his submission to the Conqueror, and obtained pardon; while the rest dispersed themselves, and left the Normans undisputed masters of the whole kingdom. Edgar Atheling, who had been drawn among the rest into this insurrection, sought a retreat in Scotland from the pursuit of his enemies. There he continued, till by proper solicita-

tion, he was again taken into favour by the king. From that time he remained in England in a private station, content with opulence and security; perhaps as happy, though not so splendid, as if he had succeeded in the career of his ambition.

William, being now acknowledged master of a people that more than once showed reluctance to his government, resolved to throw off all appearance of lenity, and to incapacitate them from future insurrections. His first step was to order the county of Northumberland to be laid waste, the houses to be burnt, the instruments of husbandry to be destroyed, and the inhabitants to seek new habitations. By this order it is said that above one hundred thousand persons perished either by the sword or famine; and the country is supposed, even at this day, to bear the marks of its ancient depopulation. He next proceeded to confiscate all the estates of the English gentry, and to grant them liberally to his Norman followers. Thus all the ancient and honourable families were reduced to beggary, and the English found themselves entirely excluded from every road that led either to honour or preferment. They had the cruel mortification to find, that all his power only tended to their depression; and that the scheme of their subjection was attended with every circumstance of insult and indignity.

He was not yet, however, sufficiently arbitrary to change all the laws then in being for those of his own country. He only made several innovations, and ordered the law-pleas in the several courts to be made in the Norman language. Yet, with all

his endeavours to make the French the popular language, the English still gained ground; and, what deserves remark, it had adopted much more of the French idiom for two or three reigns before than during the whole line of the Norman kings succeeding.

The feudal law had been before introduced into England by the Saxons; but this monarch reformed it according to the model of that practised in his native dominions. He divided all the lands of England, except the royal demesne, into baronies, and conferred those, upon certain military conditions, on the most considerable of his followers. These had a power of sharing their grants to inferior tenants, who were denominated knights or vassals, and who paid their lord the same duty that he paid the sovereign. To the first class of these baronies the English were not admitted; and the few who were permitted still to retain their landed property, were content to be received in the second. The barons exercised all kinds of jurisdiction within their own manors, and held courts in which they administered justice to their own vassals. This law extended not only to the laity, but also to the bishops and clergy. They had usurped a power, during the Saxon succession, of being governed within themselves; but William restrained them to the exercise of their ecclesiastical power only, and submitted them to a similitude of duties with the rest of their fellow-subjects. This they at first regarded as a grievous imposition; but the king's authority was established by a power that neither the clergy nor the pope could intimidate. But, to keep the clergy as much as possible in his interests, he ap-

pointed none but his own countrymen to the most considerable church-dignities, and even displaced Stigand, archbishop of Canterbury, upon some frivolous pretences. His real motive was, that such a dignity was too exalted for a native to possess.

While he was thus employed in humbling the clergy, he was no less solicitous to repress many of those superstitious practices to which they had given countenance. He endeavoured to abolish trials by *ordeal* and *camp.fight.* The ordeal trial, which had been originally of pagan institution, and was still held in veneration by the Saxon Christians, was either by fire or water. It was used in criminal cases, where the suspicions were strong, but the proofs not evident. In that of fire, the person accused was brought into an open plain, and several red-hot plough-shares were placed at equal intervals before him: over these he was to walk blindfold; and if he escaped unhurt, he was acquitted of the charge. In the trial by water, the person accused was thrown, bound hand and foot, into the water: if he sunk, he was declared innocent; if he swam, he was executed, as being thus miraculously convicted. The trial by camp-fight was performed by single combat, in lists appointed for that purpose, between the accuser and the accused. He who, in such a case, came off victorious, was deemed innocent; and he who was conquered, if he survived his antagonist's resentment in the field, was sure to suffer as a malefactor some time after. Both these trials William abolished, as unchristian and unjust; and he reduced all causes to the judgment of twelve men, of a rank nearly equal to that of

the prisoner. This method of trial by jury was common to the Saxons, as well as the Normans, long before; but it was now confirmed by him with all the sanction of undisputed authority.

While William was thus employed, in rewarding his associates, punishing the refractory, and giving laws for the benefit of all, he was threatened with
[1073.] an insurrection in his dominions on the continent, which he thought his presence necessary to suppress. Unwilling, however, to draw off his Norman forces from England, he carried over a considerable army, composed almost entirely of English; and by those brave troops he soon reduced the revolters to submission. Thus we see a whimsical vicissitude of fortune: the inhabitants of Normandy brought over for the conquest of the English, and the English sent back to conquer the Normans. However, William had not time to enjoy his success unmolested, for accounts were quickly brought him from England, that a new conspiracy was formed, more dreadful, in being supported by the joint efforts of the Normans and the English. The adventurers who had followed the fortunes o William into England, had been bred in authority and independence at home, and were ill able to endure the absolute authority which this monarch had for some time assumed. The discontents were therefore become very general among these haughty nobles, and some wanted only the opportunity of his absence to break out into open rebellion. Among the number was Roger, earl of Hereford, son and heir to Fitz-Osborne, who had been the king's principal favourite. This nobleman had, ei-

ther by way of compliment to the king, or in compliance with some obligation of the feudal law, solicited William's consent to permit the marriage of his sister with Ralph de Guader, earl of Norfolk; but he was flatly refused. Nevertheless, he proceeded to solemnise the nuptials with great magnificence, assembling all his friends, and those of Guader, upon the occasion. As the parents of the new-married couple were well acquainted with the character of William, whose resentment they had every reason to dread, they took the opportunity, while the company was heated with wine, to introduce that as a subject of conversation. They inveighed against the severity of his government; they observed, that, by means of his excessive impositions, he had taken with one hand what he had given with the other; they affected to commiserate the English, whom he had reduced to beggary; and aggravated the defects in his disposition, which they represented as haughty and unforgiving. The guests were ready enough at any time to concur in their complaints; but now, warmed by the jollity of the entertainment, they put no bounds to their zeal. They unanimously entered into a conspiracy to shake off his yoke; and earl Waltheoff himself, whom we have already seen pardoned upon a former insurrection, was among the foremost on this occasion. But it was not without the greatest anxiety that he reflected, in his cooler intervals, upon an engagement made in the ardour of intoxication, big with the most fatal consequences both to himself and his country. In this state of perturbation he had recourse to his wife,

the niece of the king, and unbosomed himself to her, as he had the most firm reliance on her fidelity. But he was deceived; for she was in love with another, and only wanted an opportunity of getting rid of her husband at any rate. She, therefore, instantly found means to communicate the whole affair to the king, taking care to represent her husband's conduct in the most disadvantageous point of light. In the mean time, Waltheoff himself gave way to his internal remorse, and confessed the whole conspiracy to Lanfranc, who exhorted him, by all means to reveal it to the king; which he was at last persuaded to do: but it was not till the whole affair had been divulged by his faithless consort. William coolly thanked him for his fidelity; but the former account of his perfidy sunk deep into the king's mind, and he secretly resolved to punish it.

During this interval, the conspirators, being informed that Waltheoff was gone over to Normandy, justly concluded that their designs were betrayed, and flew to arms before their schemes were ripe for execution. The earl of Hereford was checked by Walter de Lacy, a great baron in the king's interest. The earl of Norfolk was defeated by Odo, the king's brother; and the prisoners who were taken had each the right foot cut off, in order to deter others from a similitude of treason. The earl himself retired to Denmark; so that William, upon his arrival in England, found that nothing remained for him to do but to punish the criminals; which was performed with unusual severity. Many of the rebels were hanged, some had their eyes put out, and others their hands cut off. The

unfortunate Waltheoff, who had imprudently entered into the conspiracy, but attempted to atone for his fault by an early confession, found no mercy. He was rich, and he was an Englishman; two faults that served to aggravate his guilt: he was accordingly tried, condemned, and executed. His infamous wife did not long enjoy the fruits of her perfidy; but, falling some time after under the king's displeasure, was abandoned by the world, and passed the rest of her life in contempt, remorse, and misery. Some assert that this nobleman fell a sacrifice to the cruelty of Odo, not of William; but, however that may be, it is certain that Waltheoff, and Fitz-Aubert, a noble Norman, who was also beheaded on this occasion, were the only persons of note that were executed during the reign of William the Conqueror. Having thus re-established the peace of his government, and extinguished the last embers of rebellion with blood, William returned once more to the continent, in order to pursue Guader, who, escaping from England, had taken refuge with the count of Bretagne. Finding him, however, too powerfully protected by that prince, instead of prosecuting his vengeance, he wisely came to a treaty with the count, in which Guader was included.

William having thus secured the peace of his dominions, now expected rest from his labours; and, finding none either willing or powerful enough to oppose him, he hoped that the end of his reign would be marked with prosperity and peace. But such is the blindness of human hope, that he found enemies where he least expected them, and such

too as served to imbitter all the latter part of his life. His last troubles were excited by his own children, from the opposing of whom he could expect to reap neither glory nor gain. He had four sons, Robert, Richard, William, and Henry, besides several daughters. Robert, the eldest son, surnamed Curthose from the shortness of his legs, was a prince who inherited all the bravery of his family and nation, but was rather bold than prudent, rather enterprising than politic. Earnest after fame, and even impatient that his father should stand in the way, he aspired at that independence to which his temper, as well as some circumstances in his situation, conspired to invite him. He had formerly been promised by his father the government of Maine, a province of France, which had submitted to William, and was also declared successor to the dukedom of Normandy. However, when he came to demand the execution of these engagements, he received an absolute denial; the king shrewdly observing, that it was not his custom to throw off his clothes till he went to bed. Robert openly declared his resentment, and was often heard to express his jealousy of his two surviving brothers, William and Henry; for Richard was killed, in hunting, by a stag. These, by greater assiduity, had wrought upon the credulity and affections of the king, and consequently were the most obnoxious to Robert. A mind, therefore, so well prepared for resentment, soon found or made a cause for an open rupture. The princes were one day in sport together, and, in the idle petulance of play, took it in their heads to throw water

upon their elder brother as he passed through the court, on leaving their apartment. Robert, all alive to suspicion, quickly turned this idle frolic into a studied indignity; and having these jealousies inflamed by one of his favourites, he drew his sword, and ran up-stairs with an intent to take revenge. The whole castle was quickly filled with tumult, and it was not without some difficulty that the king himself was able to appease it. But he could not allay the animosity, which, from that moment, ever after prevailed in his family. Robert, attended by several of his confederates, withdrew to Rouen that very night, hoping to surprise the castle; but his design was defeated by the governor.

The flame being thus kindled, the popular character of the prince, and a sympathy of manners, engaged all the young nobility of Normandy and Maine, as well as of Anjou and Bretagne, to espouse his quarrel; even his mother, it is said, supported him by secret remittances, and aided him in this obstinate resistance by private encouragement. This unnatural contest continued for several years to inflame the Norman state; and William was at last obliged to have recourse to England for supporting his authority against his son. Accordingly, drawing an army of Englishmen together, he led them over into Normandy; where he soon compelled Robert and his adherents to quit the field, and he was quickly reinstated in all his dominions. As for Robert, being no longer able to resist his father, he was obliged to take shelter in the castle of Gerberoy, which the king of France had provided for [1077.] [1079.]

him, where he was shortly after besieged by his father. As the garrison was strong, and conscious of guilt, it made a most gallant defence; and many were the skirmishes and duels that were fought under its walls. In one of these, accident brought the king and his son together; but, being both concealed by their helmets, they attacked each other with mutual fury. A fierce and dreadful combat ensued between them, till at last the young prince wounded his father in the arm, and threw him from his horse. The next blow would, in all probability, have put an end to the king's life, had he not cried out for assistance. Robert then immediately recollected his father's voice, and at once stung with a consciousness of his crime, he leaped from his horse, and raised the fallen monarch from the ground. He then prostrated himself in his presence, and craved pardon for his offences, promising for the future a strict adherence to his duty. The resentment harboured by the king was not so easily appeased; perhaps his indignation at being overcome, added to his anger: instead, therefore, of pardoning his son, he gave him his malediction, and departed for his own camp on Robert's horse, which the prince had assisted him to mount. However, the conduct of the son served, after some recollection, to appease the father. As soon as William had returned to Rouen, he became reconciled to Robert, and carried him with him into England, where he was successfully employed in retaliating an invasion of Malcolm, king of Scotland.

[1081.] William, being thus freed from foreign and domestic enemies, began to have sufficient leisure for a more attentive application to the

duties of peace. For this purpose, the Domesday Book was compiled by his order, which contains a general survey of all the lands in the kingdom; their extent in each district; their proprietors, tenures, value, the quantity of meadow, pasture, wood, and arable land, which they contained; and in some counties, the number of tenants, cottagers, and people of all denominations, who lived upon them. This detail enabled him to regulate the taxations in such a manner, that all the inhabitants were compelled to bear their duties in proportion to their abilities.

He was no less careful of the methods of saving money than of accumulation. He reserved a very ample revenue for the crown; and, in the general distribution of land among his followers, he kept possession of no less than fourteen hundred manors in different parts of the country. Such was his income, that it is justly said to have exceeded that of any English prince either before or since his time. No king of England was ever so opulent; none so able to support the splendour and magnificence of a court; none had so many places of trust and profit to bestow; and none, consequently, had his commands attended with such implicit obedience.

There was one pleasure to which William, as well as all the Normans and ancient Saxons, was addicted, which was hunting. To indulge this in its utmost extent, he depopulated the county of Hants for thirty miles, turning out the inhabitants, destroying all the villages, and making the wretched outcasts no compensation for such an injury. In the time of the Saxon kings, all noblemen without

distinction had a right to hunt in the royal forests; but William appropriated all these, and published very severe laws to prohibit his subjects from encroaching on this part of his prerogative. The killing of a deer, a boar, or even a hare, was punished with the loss of the delinquent's eyes, at a time when the killing of a man might be atoned for by paying a moderate fine or composition.

As the king's wealth and power were so great, it may be easily supposed that the riches of his ministers were in proportion. Those of his uterine brother Odo, bishop of Bayeux, were so great, that he resolved to purchase the papacy. For this purpose, taking the opportunity of William's absence, he equipped a vessel at the Isle of Wight, on board of which he sent immense treasures, and prepared for his embarkation; but he was unfortunately detained by contrary winds. In the mean time William, having had intimation of his design, resolved to prevent the exportation of so much wealth from his dominions. Accordingly, returning from Normandy, where he was then employed, he came into England at the very instant his brother was stepping on board, and immediately ordered him to be made a prisoner. His attendants, however, respecting the immunities of the church, scrupled to execute his commands; so that the king himself was obliged with his own hands to seize him. Odo, disconcerted at so unexpected an intervention, appealed to the pope; who, he alleged, was the only person upon earth to try a bishop. To this the king replied, that he did not seize him as bishop of Bayeux, but as the earl of Kent; and in that capacity he expected,

and would have, an account of his administration. He was therefore sent prisoner into Normandy; and, notwithstanding all the remonstrances and threats of Gregory, he was detained in custody during the remainder of William's reign.

William had scarcely put an end to this transaction when he felt a very severe blow in the death of Matilda, his queen; and, as misfortunes generally come together, he received information of a general insurrection in Maine, the nobility of which had been always averse from the Norman government. Upon his arrival on the continent, he found that the insurgents had been secretly assisted and excited by the king of France, whose policy consisted in thus lessening the Norman power, by creating dissensions among the nobles of its different provinces. William's displeasure was not a little increased by the account he received of some railleries which that monarch had thrown out against him. It seems that William, who was become corpulent, had been detained in bed some time by sickness; and Philip was heard to say, that he only lay in of a big belly. This so provoked the English monarch, that he sent him word he should soon be up, and would at his churching present such a number of tapers as would set the kingdom of France in a flame.

In order to perform this promise he levied a strong army, and, entering the Isle of France, destroyed and burned all the villages and houses without opposition. He took the town of Mante, which he reduced to ashes. But the [1087.]

progress of these hostilities was stopped by an accident, which shortly after put an end to William's life. His horse chancing to place his fore-feet on some hot ashes, plunged so violently that the rider was thrown forward, and bruised upon the pommel of the saddle to such a degree, that he suffered a relapse, and was obliged to return to Rouen. Finding his illness increase, and being sensible of the approach of death, he began to turn his eyes to a future state, from which the pursuit of ambition had long averted them. He was now struck with remorse for all his cruelties and depredations: he endeavoured to atone for his former offences by large presents to churches and monasteries, and by giving liberty to many prisoners whom he had unjustly detained. He was even prevailed on, though not without reluctance, to consent, with his dying breath, to the deliverance of his brother Odo, against whom he was extremely incensed. He then bequeathed Normandy and Le Maine to his eldest son Robert, whom he never loved; to Henry he left five thousand pounds and his mother's jointure, without the smallest territory; and though he would not pretend to establish the succession of the crown of England, to which he now began to perceive that he had no title, he expressed his wish that it might devolve to his favourite son William, whom he immediately dispatched with letters to the archbishop of Canterbury, desiring his assistance. Having thus regulated his temporal affairs, he was conveyed in a litter to a little village near Rouen, where he might settle the concerns of his soul with-

out noise or interruption. It was there that he died, in the sixty-fifth year of his age, after having reigned fifty-three years in Normandy and almost twenty-one in England. His body was interred in the church at Caen, which he himself had founded: but his interment was attended with a remarkable circumstance. As the body was carrying to the grave, the prelates and priests attending with the most awful silence, a man, who stood upon an eminence, was heard to cry out with a loud voice, and to forbid the interment of the body in a spot that had been unjustly seized by the Conqueror. "That very place," cried the man, "is the area of my father's house; and I now summon the departed soul before the divine tribunal to do me justice, and to atone for so great an oppression." The bishops and attendants were struck with the man's intrepid conduct; they inquired into the truth of his charge, and, finding it just, agreed to satisfy him for the damages he had sustained.

William was a prince of great courage and capacity; ambitious, politic, cruel, vindictive, and rapacious. He was fond of glory, and parsimonious merely for the purposes of ostentation. Though sudden and impetuous in his enterprises, he was cool, deliberate, and indefatigable in times of danger. He is said, by the Norman writers, to have been above eight feet high, his body strong-built and well-proportioned, and his strength such that none of his courtiers could draw his bow. He talked little; he was seldom affable to any, except to Lanfranc, archbishop of Canterbury; with him he was ever

meek and gentle—with all others stern and austere. Though he rendered himself formidable to all, and odious to many, yet he had policy sufficient to transmit his power to posterity; and the throne is still occupied by his descendants.

MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL. THE TANJORE

CHAPTER VI.

WILLIAM RUFUS.

WILLIAM, surnamed RUFUS from the colour of his hair, had no sooner received the late king's letter to Lanfranc in his favour, than he hastened to take measures for securing himself on the throne. Arriving, therefore, before the news of William's death had yet reached England, his first care was to take possession of the treasure left by the king at Winchester, which amounted to the sum of sixty thousand pounds. He then addressed the primate, who had always considered him with an eye of peculiar affection, and who now, finding the justness of his claim, instantly proceeded to the ceremony of his coronation. At the same time Robert, who had been appointed successor to Normandy, took peaceable possession of that government; where his person was loved, and his accession long desired.

In the beginning of the reign of William Rufus, the English began to think they had hitherto mistaken this prince's character, who had always appeared to them rude and brutal. He at first seemed to pay the utmost regard to the counsels of Lanfranc the primate, which were mild and gentle, and constantly calculated for the benefit of the nation. Nevertheless, the Norman barons, who knew him better, perceived that he kept his disposition under an unnatural restraint, and that he only waited an opportunity for throwing off the mask when his power

should be established. They were, from the beginning, displeased at the division of the empire by the late king; they eagerly desired an union as before, and looked upon Robert as the proper owner of the whole. The natural disposition also of this prince was as pleasing to them as that of William his brother was odious. Robert was open, generous, and humane; he carried his facility to an excess, as he could scarcely find strength of mind to give any of his adherents the mortification of a refusal. But this was a quality no way disagreeable to those who expected to build their ambition on the easy pliancy of his temper. A powerful conspiracy was therefore carried on against William; and Odo, the late king's brother, undertook to conduct it to maturity.

William, sensible of the danger that threatened him on all sides, endeavoured to gain the affections of the native English, whom he prevailed upon, by promises of future good treatment and preference of the distribution of his favours, to espouse his interests. He was soon in the field; and, at the head of a numerous army, showed himself in readiness to oppose all who should dispute his pretensions. In the mean time Odo had written to Robert an account of the conspiracy in his favour, urging him to use dispatch, and exciting him by the greatness of the danger, and the splendour of the reward. Robert gave the most positive assurances of speedy assistance; but his indolence was not to be excited by distant expectations. Instead of employing his money in levies to support his friends in England, he squandered

it away in idle expenses and unmerited benefits, so that he procrastinated his departure till the opportunity was lost; while William exerted himself with incredible activity to dissipate the confederacy before he could arrive. Nor was this difficult to effect: the conspirators had, in consequence of Robert's assurances, taken possession of some fortresses; but the appearance of the king soon reduced them to implore for mercy. He granted them their lives, but confiscated all their estates, and banished them the kingdom.

William, thus freed from all danger of insurrection, and fixed in the peaceable possession of the kingdom, showed the first instance of his perverse disposition, in his ingratitude to the English who had secured him on the throne.

The death of Lanfranc, which followed shortly after, took off all restraint from his inclinations; and his mind now appeared in its natural deformity, tyrannical and unjust. He ordered a new survey to be taken of all the lands and property of the kingdom; and wherever he found them undervalued in the Domesday-book, he raised the proportion of taxes accordingly. Even the privileges of the church, which were held very sacred in those times of ignorance, were but a feeble rampart against his usurpations; he seized the vacant bishoprics, and openly put to sale such abbeys as he thought proper. But, not contented with exerting his tyranny over his own dominions, he was resolved to extend his authority over those of his brother. In consequence of this resolution he appeared in Normandy at the head of [1091.]

a numerous army; but the nobility, on both sides, strongly connected by interest and alliances, brought on an accommodation. Among other articles of this treaty, it was agreed, that in case either of the brothers should die without issue, the survivor should inherit all his dominions. It was in vain that Henry, the other brother, remonstrated against this act of injustice; it was in vain that he took arms, and even defended a little fortress on the coast of Normandy, for some time, against their united assaults. He was at last obliged to surrender; and, being despoiled of even the small patrimony that was left him, he wandered about for some years with a few attendants, and was often reduced to great poverty.

It was in besieging this fortress that a circumstance or two have been related, which serve to mark the character of the two brothers. As William was taking the air one day on horseback, at some distance from the camp, he perceived two horsemen riding out from the castle, who soon came up and attacked him. In the very first encounter, the king's horse, being killed, overturned, and lay upon him in such a manner that he could not disengage himself. His antagonist, while he remained in this situation, lifted up his arm to dispatch him; when William exclaimed, in a menacing tone, "Hold, villain! I am the king of England." The two soldiers were immediately seized with veneration and awe; and, helping him up, accommodated him with one of their horses. William was not ungrateful for this service; he mounted the horse, and, ordering the soldier to

follow, took him into his service. Soon after, Robert had an occasion to show still greater marks of generosity; for, hearing that the garrison was in great distress for want of water, he not only ordered that Henry should be permitted to supply himself, but also sent him some pipes of wine for his own table. Rufus did not at all approve of this ill-timed generosity; but Robert answered his remonstrances by saying, "Shall we suffer our brother to die with thirst? Where shall we find another when he is gone?"

The intestine and petty discords that ensued upon this accommodation between Robert and Rufus, seem scarcely worthy of the attention of history. They indeed produced more real calamities to the people than splendid invasions and bloody battles; as the depredations of petty tyrants are ever more severely felt by the poor than the magnanimous projects of ambition. A rupture ensued between Rufus and Malcolm, king of Scotland, in which the latter was ultimately surprised, and slain, by a party from Alnwick castle.

A new breach was made some time after between the brothers, in which Rufus found means to encroach still further upon Robert's possessions. [1093.] An incursion from the Welsh filled the country of England with alarm; but they were quickly repelled, and obliged to find refuge in their native mountains. [1094.] A conspiracy of the Norman barons in England threatened serious consequences; but their schemes were prevented and frustrated. Robert Mowbray, earl of Northumberland, who was at the head of this

plot, was thrown into prison, where he died, after thirty years confinement. The count of Eu, another conspirator, denying the charge, fought with his accuser in presence of the court at Windsor, and, being worsted in the combat, was condemned to be castrated, and to have his eyes put out. Every conspiracy, thus detected, served to enrich the king, who took care to apply to his own use those treasures that had been amassed for the purpose of dethroning him.

But the memory of these transient broils and unsuccessful treasons was now totally eclipsed by one of the most noted enterprises that ever adorned the annals of nations, or excited the attention of mankind: I mean the crusades, which were now first projected. Peter the Hermit, a native of Amiens in Picardy, was a man of great zeal, courage, and piety. He had made a pilgrimage to the holy sepulchre at Jerusalem, and beheld, with indignation, the cruel manner in which the Christians were treated by the infidels, who were in possession of that place. Unable to suppress his resentment, upon his return he entertained the bold design of freeing the whole country from the Mahometan yoke, and of restoring to the Christians the land where their religion was first propagated. He proposed his views to Urban II. at that time pope, who permitted rather than assisted this bold enthusiast in his aims. Peter, therefore, warmed with a zeal that knew no bounds, began to preach the crusade, and to excite the princes of Christendom to the recovery of the Holy Land. Bareheaded and bare-footed, he travelled from court

to court, preaching as he went, and inflaming the zeal of every rank of people. The fame of this design being thus diffused, prelates, nobles, and princes, concurred in seconding it; and, at a council held at Clermont, where the pope himself exhorted to the undertaking, the whole assembly cried out with one voice, as if by inspiration, *It is the will of God! It is the will of God!* From that time nothing was seen but a universal migration of the western nations into the East; men of all ranks flew to arms with the utmost alacrity, and bore the sign of the cross upon their right shoulder, as a mark of their devotion to the cause. In the midst of this universal ardour that was diffused over Europe, men were not entirely forgetful of their temporal interest; for some, hoping a more magnificent settlement in the soft regions of Asia, sold their European property for whatever they could obtain, contented with receiving any thing for what they were predetermined to relinquish. Among the princes who felt and acknowledged this general spirit of enterprise, was Robert, duke of Normandy. The crusade was entirely adapted to his inclinations and his circumstances; he was brave, zealous, covetous of glory, harassed by insurrections, and, what was more than all, naturally fond of change. In order to supply money to defray the necessary charges of so expensive an undertaking, he offered to mortgage his dukedom of Normandy to his brother Rufus for a stipulated sum of money. This sum, which was no greater than ten thousand marks, was readily promised by Rufus, whose am-

bition was upon the watch to seize every advantage. He was no ways solicitous about raising the money, as he knew the riches of his clergy. From them, therefore, he forced the whole,—heedless of their murmurs, and aggravating his injustice by the pious pretences he made use of to cover his extortions; thus equipping his brother for his romantic expedition to the Holy Land, he, more wisely, and more safely, took peaceable possession of his dukedom at home.

In this manner was Normandy once more united to England; and from this union, afterwards, arose those numerous wars with France, which for whole centuries continued to depopulate both nations, without conducing in the end to increase the power of either. However, Rufus was not a little pleased with this acquisition; he made a voyage to his new dominion, and took possession of it for five years, according to agreement with [1096.] his brother. He also demanded of the king of France a part of the territory of Vexin, which he pretended was an appurtenance to his duchy, and even attempted to enforce his claims by arms. But though the cession of Maine and Normandy greatly increased the king's territories, they added little to his real power, as his new subjects were composed of men of independent spirits, more ready to dispute than obey his commands. Many were the revolts and insurrections which he was obliged to quell in person; and no sooner was one conspiracy suppressed than another rose to give him fresh disquietude.

In the midst of these foreign troubles, he found

himself involved in a disagreeable quarrel with Anselm, archbishop of Canterbury, a prelate of a haughty disposition, and extremely tenacious of the rights of the clergy. There was at that time a schism in the church, between Urban and Clement, who both pretended to the papacy; and Anselm, who had already acknowledged Urban, was determined, without the king's consent, to introduce his authority into England. William, who, imitating his father's example, had prohibited his subjects from recognising any pope whom he had not previously approved, was enraged at Anselm's pretensions. A synod was summoned at Rockingham, for deposing the prelate; but, instead of obeying the king, the members of it declared, that none but the pope could inflict a censure on their primate. To this was soon after added a fresh offence. Anselm, being required to furnish his quota of soldiers for an intended expedition against the Welsh, reluctantly complied; but he sent them so ill equipped, that Rufus threatened him with a prosecution. As the resentments on both sides were increased, their mutual demands were raised in proportion, till at length their anger proceeded to recrimination; and Anselm, finding it dangerous to remain in the kingdom, desired permission to retire to Rome. This request the king very readily complied with; but, in order to mortify the prelate yet more, he sent an officer to search his baggage after he was on-board, and to seize all his money, on pretence of a law which forbade the exportation of silver. Not content with this, he ordered all his temporalities to be

confiscated, and actually kept possession of them the remaining part of his life.

This open infringement of what were then considered as rights of the church, served to exasperate the pope, as well as all the ecclesiastics of his own dominions, against him. Urban even menaced him with the sentence of excommunication; but he was too earnestly engaged in the crusade to attend to any other business. Rufus, therefore, little regarded those censures, which he found were ineffectual: he had but very little religion at best; and the amazing infatuation of the times inspired him with no very high ideas of the wisdom of its professors. It is reported of him, that he once accepted fifty marks of a Jew, whose son had been converted to Christianity, and who engaged him by that present to assist in bringing back the youth to Judaism. William employed both menaces and persuasion to that purpose; but, finding his efforts ineffectual, he sent for the father, and informing him that the new convert was obstinate in his faith, he returned him half the money, and kept the rest for his pains. At another time, he is said to have sent for some learned Christian theologians and some Jewish rabbies, and bade them fairly dispute the points of their religion before him. He was perfectly indifferent, he said, which should prevail; he had his ears open to both, and he would embrace that doctrine, which, upon comparison, should be found supported by the most solid arguments.

In this manner Rufus proceeded, careless of approbation or censure, and only intent upon ex-

tending his dominions, either by purchase or conquest. The earl of Poictou and Guienne, inflamed with a desire of going upon the crusade, had gathered an immense multitude for that expedition, but wanted money to forward his preparations. He had recourse therefore to Rufus, and offered to mortgage all his dominions, without much considering what would become of his unhappy subjects that he thus disposed of. The king accepted this offer with his usual avidity, and had prepared a fleet and an army, in order to take possession of the rich provinces thus consigned to his trust. But an accident put an end to all his ambitious projects, and served to rid the world of a mercenary tyrant. His favourite amusement was hunting, almost the only relaxation of princes in those rude times, when the other arts of peace were but little cultivated. The New Forest was generally the scene of his sport; and there he usually spent those hours which were not employed in business of a more serious nature. One day, as he was mounting his horse in order to take his customary amusement, he is said to have been stopped by a monk, who warned him, from some dreams he had the night before, to abstain from that day's diversion. Rufus, smiling at his superstition, ordered him to be paid for his zeal, but desired him to have more favourable dreams for the future. Thus setting forward, he began the chase, attended by Walter Tyrrel, a French knight, famous for archery, who always accompanied him in these excursions. Towards sun-set, they found themselves separated from the

rest of their retinue; and the king dismounted, either through fatigue, or in expectation of a fresh horse. Just at that instant a stag bounded out before him; and Rufus, drawing his bow, wounded the animal, yet not so mortally but that it fled, while he followed in hopes of seeing it fall. As the setting sun beamed in his face, he held up his hands before his eyes, and stood in that posture, when Tyrrel, who had been engaged in the same pursuit, let fly an arrow, which, glancing from a tree, struck the king to the heart. He dropped dead instantaneously; while the innocent author of his death, terrified at the accident, put spurs to his horse, hastened to the sea-shore, embarked for France, and joined in the crusade that was then setting out for Jerusalem. William's body being found by some countrymen passing through the forest, was laid across a horse, and carried to Winchester, where it was next day interred in the cathedral, without ceremony, or any marks of respect. Few lamented his fate, and none of the courtiers attended his funeral.

It requires no great art to draw the character of a prince whose vices were compensated by scarce one virtue. Rufus was a perfidious, encroaching, and a dangerous neighbour; an unkind and ungenerous relation; a rapacious and yet a prodigal prince. However, there remain to this day, some monuments of his public spirit; the Tower, Westminster-hall, and London-bridge, were all built by him, and are evidences that the treasures of government were not all expended in vain. William Rufus was slain in the thirteenth

year of his reign, and about the fortieth of his age. As he was never married, he left no legitimate issue behind him: the succession, therefore, of course devolved upon Robert, his elder brother; but he was then too distant to assert his pretensions.

CHAPTER VII.

HENRY I. *surnamed* BEAU-CLERC.

THERE were now two competitors for the crown, —Robert, who had engaged in the holy war, and Henry, the youngest brother, who continued at home. Had Robert been in Normandy when William died, there is no doubt, from the popularity of his character, and from the treaty formerly concluded between the two brothers, that he would have been elected without opposition. This valiant and generous prince having led his followers into Palestine, and there distinguished himself by his courage, his affable disposition, and unbounded generosity, after the taking of Jerusalem, began to think of returning home, and of enjoying in tranquillity that glory which he had acquired in the field against the infidels. But instead of taking the most direct road to England, he passed through Italy, where he became acquainted with Sibylla, daughter of count Conversano, a lady of celebrated beauty; and, marrying her, he lavished away, in her company, those hours which should have been employed in the recovery of his kingdom.

In the mean time Henry, who had been hunting in the New Forest when his brother was slain, took the earliest advantage of the occasion, and hastening to Winchester, resolved to secure the royal treasure, which he knew to be the best assistant in seconding his aims. William de Breteuil, who had

the care of the treasury, informed of the king's death, opposed himself boldly to Henry's pretensions. He ventured to assure Henry, that the money in his custody, as well as the crown, belonged to his elder brother, and that he was resolved to continue firm in his just allegiance. The dispute was on the point of producing bloodshed, when several of Henry's partisans arriving compelled Breteuil to surrender the treasure, with a part of which they, in all probability, hoped to be rewarded for their service. Being possessed of this, without losing time, he next hastened to London, where he procured himself to be proclaimed king, and instantly proceeded to the exercise of the royal dignity. The barons, as well as the people, acquiesced in a claim which they were unprepared to resist, and yielded obedience from the fears of immediate danger.

Whenever there is a disputed throne, the people generally become umpires, and thus regain a part of those natural rights of which they might have been deprived. Henry easily foresaw that, to secure his usurped title, his subjects were to be indulged, and that his power could only find security in their affections. His first care, therefore, was to make several concessions in their favour. He granted them a charter, establishing the churches in possession of all their immunities; abolishing those excessive fines which used to be exacted from heirs; granting his barons and military tenants the power of bequeathing their money by will; remitting all debts due to the crown; offering a pardon for all former offences, and promis-

ing to confirm and observe all the laws of Edward the Confessor. These concessions pleased the clergy and the people, while the king, who meant only to observe them while his power was in dispute, boasted of the lenity of his government.

Still further to ingratiate himself with the people, Henry expelled from court all the ministers of his brother's debauchery and arbitrary power; he stripped Ralph Flambard, who had been his brother's principal favourite, and consequently obnoxious to the people, of his dignity, and had him confined to the Tower. But what gave him the greatest share of popularity was his recalling Anselm, archbishop of Canterbury, who had been banished during the last reign, to his former dignity and his favour. One thing only remained to confirm his claims without danger of a rival. The English still remembered their Saxon monarchs with gratitude, and beheld them excluded the throne with regret. There still remained some of the descendants of that favourite line, and among others, Matilda, the niece of Edgar Atheling; which lady having declined all pretensions to royalty, was bred up in a convent, and had actually taken the veil. Upon her Henry first fixed his eyes as a proper consort, by whose means the long breach between the Saxon and Norman interests would be finally united. It only remained to get over the scruple of her being a nun: but this a council, devoted to his interests, readily admitted; and Matilda being pronounced free to marry, the nuptials were celebrated with great pomp and solemnity.

It was at this favourable juncture that Robert

returned from abroad, and, after taking possession of his native dominions, laid his claim to the crown of England. But he was now, as in his former attempts, too late for success. However, as he was a man of undaunted resolution, he seemed resolved to dispute his pretensions to the last; and the great fame he had acquired in the East did not a little serve to forward his endeavours. He was also excited to these resolutions by Flambard, who had escaped from the Tower, together with several others, as well of the Norman as the English nobility. Even the seamen were affected with the general popularity of his name, and revolted to him with the greatest part of a fleet that had been equipped to oppose his passage. Henry, who outwardly pretended to slight all these preparations, yet had penetration enough to perceive that his subjects fluctuated in their inclinations between him and his brother. In this emergency he had recourse to the bigotry of the people to oppose their sentiments of justice. He paid diligent court to Anselm, whose sanctity and wisdom he pretended to revere; and this prelate, in return, employed all his credit in securing him on the throne. He scrupled not to assure the nobles of the king's sincerity in his professions of justice; and even rode through the ranks of the army, recommending to the soldiery the defence of their king, and promising to see their valour rewarded. Thus the people were retained in their allegiance to the usurper, aud the army marched cheerfully forward to meet Robert and his forces, which were landed in safety at Portsmouth. When the two armies

came in sight, they both seemed equally unwilling to hazard a battle; and their leaders, who [1101.] saw that much more would be lost than gained by such a conflict, made proposals for an accommodation. This, after the removal of a few obstacles, was agreed to; and it was stipulated that Robert, upon the receipt of a certain sum, should resign his pretensions to England; and that if either of the princes died without issue, the other should succeed to his dominions. This treaty being ratified, the armies on each side were disbanded; and Robert, having lived two months in the utmost harmony with his brother, returned in peace to his own dominions.

But it was not in the power of formal treaties to bind up the resentment of a monarch who knew himself injured, and found it in his power to take revenge. Henry soon showed his resolution to punish all the heads of the party which had lately opposed him; and this he did, under different pretexts, and by repeated prosecutions. The earl of Shrewsbury, Arnulf de Montgomery, and Roger earl of Lancaster, were banished the kingdom, with the confiscations of their estates. Robert de Pontefract, Robert Mallet, William de Warrenne, and the earl of Cornwall, were treated with equal severity; so that Robert, finding his friends [1103.] thus oppressed, came over to England to intercede in their behalf. Henry received him very coolly, and assembled a council to deliberate in what manner he should be treated; so that Robert, finding his own liberty to be in danger, was glad to ask permission to return: which, however, was

not granted him till he consented to give up his pension.

But the consequences of Robert's indiscretion were not confined to his own safety alone: as he was totally averse to business, and only studious of the more splendid amusements or employments of life, his affairs every day began to wear a worse appearance. His servants pillaged him without compunction; and he is described as lying whole days a-bed for want of clothes, of which they had robbed him. His subjects were treated still more deplorably; for, being under the command of petty and rapacious tyrants, who plundered them without mercy, the whole country was become a scene of violence and depredation. It was in this miserable exigence that the Normans at length had recourse to Henry, from whose wise administration of his own dominions they expected a similitude of prosperity, should he take the reins [1104.] of theirs. Henry very readily promised to redress their grievances, as he knew it would be the direct method to second his own ambition. The year ensuing, therefore, he landed in Normandy with a strong army, took some of the principal towns, and showed, by the rapidity of his progress, that he meditated the entire conquest of the country.

Robert, who had already mortgaged or given away the greatest part of his demesne, spent his time in the most indolent amusements, and looked upon the progress of Henry with an eye of perfect indifference. But being at last roused from his lethargy, and finding his affairs in a desperate situation, he took the strange resolution of appealing,

in person, to Henry's natural affections, which this brave imprudent man estimated by the emotions of his own heart. Henry received him not only with coolness but contempt; and soon taught him, that no virtues will gain that man esteem who has forfeited his pretensions to prudence. Robert, thus treated with indignity, quitted his brother in a transport of rage, expressing an ardent purpose of revenge; to which Henry paid no sort of regard.

[1106.] Robert was resolved, however, to show himself formidable, even in the most distressed state of his circumstances. Possessed with high ideas of chivalry, which his expedition to the Holy Land served to heighten, he was willing to retrieve his affairs by valour, which he had lost by indolence. Being supported by the earl of Mortagne and Robert de Belesme, Henry's inveterate enemies, he raised an army, and approached his brother's camp, with a view of finishing, by a decisive battle, the quarrel between them. While the two armies were yet in sight of each other, some of the clergy employed their mediation to bring on a treaty; but as Henry insisted upon Robert's renouncing the government of his dominions entirely, and one-half of the revenue, all accommodation was rejected with disdain, and both sides prepared for battle. Robert was now entered on that scene of action in which he chiefly gloried, and in which he was always known to excel. He animated his little army by his example, and led them to the encounter with that spirit which had formerly made the infidels tremble. There was no withstanding his first shock; that quarter of the English army where he

made the impression gave way, and he was nearly on the point of gaining a complete victory. But it was different on that quarter where Belesme commanded; he was put to flight by one of the king's generals, who also advancing himself with a fresh body of horse to sustain his centre, his whole army rallied; while Robert's forces, exhausted and broken, gave ground on every side, in spite of all his efforts and acts of personal valour. But though he now saw his army defeated, and numbers falling round him, yet he refused to find safety by flight, or turn his back upon an enemy that he still disdained. He was taken prisoner, with near ten thousand of his men, and all the considerable barons who had adhered to his misfortunes. This victory was followed by the final reduction of Normandy, while Henry returned in triumph to England, leading with him his captive brother, who, after a life of bravery, generosity, and truth, now found himself not only deprived of his patrimony and his friends, but also of his freedom. Henry, unmindful of his brother's former magnanimity with regard to him, detained him a prisoner during the remainder of his life, which was no less than twenty-eight years; and he died in the castle of Cardiff, in Glamorganshire. It is even said by some that he was deprived of his sight by a red-hot copper bason applied to his eyes; while his brother attempted to stifle the reproaches of his conscience by founding the abbey of Reading, which was then considered as a sufficient atonement for every degree of barbarity.

The first step Henry took, after his return to

England, was to reform some abuses which had crept in among his courtiers; for, as they were allowed by the feudal law to live upon the king's tenants whenever he travelled, they, under colour of this, committed all manner of ravages with impunity. To remedy this disorder, he published an edict, punishing with the loss of sight all such as should, under pretext of royal authority, commit any depredation in the places through which they passed. Some disputes also concerning ecclesiastical affairs, which were supported by Anselm, archbishop of Canterbury, were compromised and adjusted. Henry was contented to resign his right of granting ecclesiastical investitures, but was allowed to receive homage from his bishops for all their temporal properties and privileges. The marriage of priests also was prohibited, and laymen were not allowed to marry within the seventh degree of affinity. The laity were also prohibited from wearing long hair—a mode of dress to which the clergy showed the utmost aversion.

These regulations served to give employment to Henry in his peaceful intervals; but the apprehensions which he had from the dissatisfaction of his Norman subjects, and his fears for the succession, gave him too much business to permit any long intervals of relaxation. His principal concern was to prevent his nephew, William, the son of Robert, from succeeding to the crown, in prejudice of William, his own son, for whom he was solicitous to secure it. His nephew was but six years of age when he committed him to the care of Helie de St. Saen; and this nobleman discharged his trust in his

education with a degree of fidelity uncommon at the barbarous period we are describing. Finding that Henry was desirous of recovering possession of his pupil's person, he withdrew, and carried him to the court of Fulk, count of Anjou, who gave him protection. This noble youth, wandering from court to court, evaded all the arts of his powerful uncle, who was not remiss in trying every method of seizing him, either by treaty or intimidation. In this struggle Lewis, the king of France, took the young adventurer's part, and endeavoured to interest the pope in his quarrel. Failing in this, he endeavoured to gain, by force of arms, what his negociations could not obtain. A war ensued between him and Henry, in which many slight battles were fought, but attended with no decisive consequences. In one of these, which was fought at Noyon, a city that Lewis had an intention to surprise, [1119.] the valour both of the nephew and the uncle were not a little conspicuous. This young man, who inherited all his father's bravery, charged the van of the English army with such impetuosity, that it fell back upon the main body, commanded by the king in person, whose utmost efforts were unequal to the attack. Still, however, exerting all his endeavours to stem the torrent of the enemy that was pouring down upon him, a Norman knight, whose name was William Crispin, discharged at his head two such furious strokes of a sabre, that his helmet was cut through, and his head severely wounded. At the sight of his own blood, which rushed down his visage, he was animated to a double exertion of his strength, and retorted the blow

with such force, that his antagonist was brought to the ground, and taken prisoner. This decided the victory in favour of the English, who pursued the French with great slaughter; and it also served to bring on an accommodation soon after, in which the interests of his nephew were entirely neglected. From this period till the time of that brave youth's death, which happened about eight years after, he appears to have been employed in ineffectual struggles to gain those dominions to which he had the most just and hereditary claims, but wanted power to back his pretensions.

[1120.] Fortune now seemed to smile upon Henry, and promise a long succession of felicity. He was in peaceable possession of two powerful states, and had a son who was acknowledged undisputed heir, arrived at his eighteenth year, whom he loved most tenderly. His daughter Matilda was also married to the emperor Henry V. of Germany, and she had been sent to that court, while yet but eight years old, for her education. All his prospects, however, were at once clouded by unforeseen misfortunes and accidents, which tinctured his remaining years with misery. The king, from the facility with which he usurped the crown, dreading that his family might be supplanted with the same ease, took care to have his son recognized as his successor by the states of England, and carried him over to Normandy to receive the homage of the barons of that duchy. After performing this requisite ceremony, Henry, returning triumphantly to England, brought with him a numerous retinue of the chief nobility, who seemed to share in his

successes. In one of the vessels of the fleet, his son, and several young noblemen, the companions of his pleasures, went together to render the passage more agreeable. The king set sail from Barfleur, and was soon carried by a fair wind out of sight of land. The prince was detained by some accident; and his sailors, as well as their captain Fitz-Stephen, having spent the interval in drinking, became so disordered, that they ran the ship upon a rock, and immediately it was dashed to pieces. The prince was put into the boat, and might have escaped, had he not been called back by the cries of Maude, his natural sister. He was at first conveyed out of danger himself, but could not leave a person so dear to perish without an effort to save her. He, therefore, prevailed upon the sailors to row back and take her in. The approach of the boat giving several others, who had been left upon the wreck, the hopes of saving their lives, numbers leaped in, and the whole went to the bottom. Above a hundred and forty young noblemen, of the principal families of England and Normandy, were lost on this occasion. A butcher of Rouen was the only person on board who escaped; he clung to the mast, and was taken up the next morning by some fishermen. Fitz-Stephen, the captain, while the butcher was thus buffeting the waves for his life, swam up to him, and inquired if the prince was yet living; when being told that he had perished, "Then I will not outlive him," said the captain, and immediately sunk to the bottom. The shrieks of these unfortunate people were heard from the shore, and the noise even reached the king's ship;

but the cause was then unknown. Henry entertained hopes for three days that his son had put into some distant port of England; but when certain intelligence of the calamity was brought him, he fainted away, and was never seen to smile from that moment to the day of his death.

The rest of this prince's life seems a mere blank: his restless desires having now nothing left worth toiling for, he appeared more fond of repose than ambition. His daughter Matilda, however, becoming a widow by the death of the emperor, he married her a second time to Geoffrey Plantagenet, eldest son of the count of Anjou, and endeavoured to ensure her accession by obliging his barons to recognize her as the heir of all his dominions. Some time after, that princess was delivered of a son, who received the name of Henry; and the king, further to ensure her succession, caused all the nobility of England and Normandy to renew their oaths of allegiance. The barons of these times were ready enough to swear whatever the monarch commanded; but, it seems, they observed it no longer than while they were compelled to obey. Henry did not long survive these endeavours to secure the succession in his family. He was seized with a sudden illness at St. Denis, a little town in Normandy, from eating too plentifully of lampreys, a
Dec. 1, dish he was particularly fond of. He died
1135. in the sixty-eighth year of his age, and the thirty-sixth of his reign, leaving by will his daughter Matilda heiress of all his dominions.

If we consider Henry's character impartially, we shall find more to admire than to love in it. It

cannot be doubted that he was a wise and valiant prince; and yet our hearts revolt against his success, and follow the unfortunate Robert even to his captivity. Henry's person was manly, his countenance engaging, his eye clear, serene, and penetrating. By his great progress in literature he acquired the name of Beau-clerc, or the Scholar; and such was the force of his eloquence, that, after a conference with him, the pope is said to have given him the preference to all the other princes of Europe. He was much addicted to women, and left behind him a numerous spurious offspring. Hunting also was one of his favourite amusements: and he is accused of augmenting the forests which had been appropriated during the former reigns for that diversion. His justice also seemed to approach to cruelty: stealing was first made capital in his reign; and false coining was punished with death and mutilation. He first granted the city of London a charter and privileges; and from this first concession we may date the origin of English liberty, such as we find it at this day.

CHAPTER VIII.

STEPHEN.

As every expedient was used during the life of the late king to fix the succession in his family, he, among others, thought that the aggrandising his nearest relations would not be an impolitic step. He only dreaded the designs of Robert and his adherents, no way mistrusting any attempts from another quarter. With these views, he was very liberal in heaping favours upon the children of his sister Adela, who had been married to the count of Blois. He thought they would be the strongest safeguard to protect him from the aspiring attempts of his brother, or his posterity; and he resolved to load them with favours, as being too far removed from the crown to entertain any hopes of succeeding in their designs to obtain it: in pursuance of this plan, he had, some years before his death, invited Stephen and Henry, the two youngest of his sister's sons, into England, and received them with great honour and esteem. Thinking that he could never do too much to secure their affections, he married Stephen to the daughter and heiress of Eustace, count of Boulogne, who brought him an immense fortune. He conferred on him the great estates forfeited by Robert Mallet in England, and by the earl of Mortagne in Normandy. Nor was Stephen's brother, Henry, without his share in the king's liberalities. He was

created abbot of Glastonbury, and bishop of Winchester; so that the two brothers were thus become by far the most powerful subjects in the kingdom.

Such great riches, so much power, and the consciousness of abilities, were the first incentives to Stephen's ambition. Placed at no great distance from the throne by birth, and perceiving the success of his uncle's usurpation, he resolved to run the same career, and strike for the crown. For this purpose, even during the king's life-time, he used all his arts to procure popularity, and to cultivate the affections of the English nobility. By his bravery, activity, and vigour, he acquired the esteem of the barons; by his generosity and familiar address he obtained the love of the people. No sooner, therefore, was the king known to be dead, than Stephen, conscious of his own power and influence, resolved to secure to himself the possession of what he had so long desired. He hastened from Normandy, where he then was, and, setting sail for England, landed at Dover. But there the citizens, apprised of his intent, shut their gates against him. Thence he went to Canterbury, where he was treated with the like disrespect; but passing on, he arrived at London, where he was immediately saluted king by all the lower ranks of the people. Being thus secure of the populace, his next step was to gain over the clergy; and for that purpose, his brother the bishop of Winchester exerted all his influence among them with great success. The archbishop of Canterbury, as he had taken the oaths of allegiance to Matilda, seemed for a while to

stand out; but Hugh Bigod (steward of the household) averring, upon oath, that the late king had expressed his intentions to make Stephen his heir, the archbishop anointed him without further scruple. Thus was Stephen made king, by one of those speedy revolutions which ever mark the barbarity of a state in which they are customary. The people acquiesced in his claims from his popularity; the clergy allowed them, being influenced by the intrigues of his brother; and the nobility acknowledged a king, from the weakness of whose title they might derive power to themselves.

The first acts of an usurper are always popular. Stephen, in order to secure his tottering throne, passed a charter, granting several privileges, to the different orders of the state; to the nobility, a permission to hunt in the royal forests; to the clergy, a speedy filling of all vacant benefices; and to the people, a restoration of the laws of Edward the Confessor. To fix himself still more securely, he took possession of the royal treasures at Winchester, and had his title ratified by the pope with a part of the money.

A crown thus gained by usurpation was to be kept only by repeated concessions. The nobility and the clergy, in proportion as they were indulged in one demand, only prepared to find out others. The barons, in return for their submission, required the right of fortifying their castles, and putting themselves in a posture of defence; nor could the king refuse his consent to such exorbitant demands, as their opposition might be fatal. The clergy imitated the same pernicious example; and, in a

short time, all England was filled with these independent fortresses, which the noblemen garrisoned with their own vassals, or with mercenary bravoes hired from the continent: nothing could exceed the misery to which the kingdom must have been reduced at that terrible period of aristocracy. Unbounded rapine was exercised upon the people for the maintenance of those troops; the private animosities of the nobility were productive of wars in every quarter; the erection of one castle proved the immediate cause of building many more; and the whole country presented a scene of petty tyranny and hostile preparation. It was in vain that a victory gained by the king over the Scots at Northallerton promised to allay the murmurs of the people; their miseries were risen to too great a height for such brilliant successes to remove. The prince having usurped the crown without a title, was obliged to tolerate in others that injustice by which he had himself risen to the throne. [1138.]

Not only real but imaginary grievances were added to raise the discontents of the people, and fill the country with complaints against government. The clergy, whose power had been firmly established on the ruins of the regal authority, began, in imitation of the lay-barons, to build castles, and entertain garrisons, sensible that their sacred pretensions would be more implicitly obeyed when their temporal power was sufficient to enforce them. Stephen, who now too late perceived the mischiefs attending these multiplied citadels, resolved to begin with destroying those of the clergy, whose

profession seemed to be averse from the duties of war. Taking, therefore, the pretence of a fray, which had risen between the retinue of the bishop of Salisbury and that of the earl of Bretagne, he seized that prelate, and obliged both him and the bishop of Lincoln to deliver up their castles which they had lately erected. This the whole body of the clergy considered as a breach of that charter which he had granted upon his accession; they loudly murmured against this infraction; and even his brother, the bishop, resolved to vindicate the privileges of the church, which he pretended were openly violated. A synod was assembled, in which the disgraced prelates openly inveighed against the king. But he, instead of answering the charge in person, sent one of his barons to plead his cause, and intimidate his accusers.

It was in this critical situation of Stephen's affairs that accounts were brought him of Matilda's landing in England, with a resolution to dispossess him, and regain the crown. Matilda, upon the death of the late king, being then in Normandy, found herself totally unable to oppose the rapid progress of her rival. She was not less unfortunate in her continental connexions than in those at home. The Norman barons, unwilling to have the union with England dissolved, almost unanimously declared for Stephen, and put him in possession of their government; while Geoffrey himself, Matilda's husband, was content to resign his pretensions, and to receive a pension from the English king. He had not, however, long acquiesced in this compromise, when he was incited to

a renewal of his wife's claims by Robert earl of Gloucester, natural son of the late king, a nobleman who had, from the beginning, opposed the accession of Stephen, and only waited an opportunity of beginning an insurrection. This haughty baron, having at length settled with his friends the project of an opposition, retired to the continent, to the court of Matilda, and sent the king a defiance, solemnly renouncing his allegiance. It was not long before he was in a capacity effectually to second his declarations; for, sensible of the power of his party in England, he landed together with Matilda, whose claims he professed to support, upon the coast of Sussex.

The whole of Matilda's retinue, upon this occasion, amounted to no more than a hundred and forty knights, who immediately took possession of Arundel castle; but the nature of her claims soon increased the number of her partisans, and her forces every day seemed to gain ground upon those of her antagonist. Meantime Stephen, being assured of her arrival, flew to besiege Arundel, where she had taken refuge, and where she was protected by the queen dowager, who secretly favoured her pretensions. This fortress was too feeble to promise a long defence; and it would have been soon taken, had it not been represented to the king, that as it was a castle belonging to the queen dowager, it would be an infringement of the respect which was her due, to attempt to take it by force. There was a spirit of generosity mixed with the rudeness of the times, that unaccountably prevailed in many trans- [1139.]

actions. Stephen permitted Matilda to come forth in safety, and had her conveyed with security to Bristol, another fortress equally strong with that from which he permitted her to retire. It would be tedious to relate the various skirmishes on either side, in pursuance of their respective pretensions; it will suffice to say, that Matilda's forces increased every day, while her antagonist seemed every hour to become more unpopular. The troops Stephen led were, in general, foreign mercenaries, commanded by tumultuous barons, more accustomed to pillage than to conquer. But, in this fluctuation of success, the kingdom was exposed to ruin, whichever side pretended to victory. The castles of the nobility were become receptacles for licensed robbers, who gave their rapine the name of attachment to party. The land was left untilled, the instruments of husbandry were destroyed or abandoned, and a terrible famine, the result of general disorder, oppressed at once the spoiled and the spoilers.

After the misery of numberless indecisive conflicts, added to the rest of the country's calamities, a complete victory, gained by the forces of Matilda, promised to terminate their disputes. Stephen had marched with his forces to relieve the city of Lincoln; the earl of Gloucester led a body of troops to second the efforts of the besiegers. [1141.] These two armies engaged within sight of the city, and a dreadful conflict ensued. After a violent shock, the two wings of Stephen's army, which were composed of horse, were put to flight; and the infantry, soon following the ex-

ample, deserted their king. All the race of the Norman conqueror were brave. Stephen was for some time left without attendants, and fought on foot in the midst of his enemies, assaulted by multitudes, and resisting all their efforts with astonishing intrepidity. Being hemmed in on every side, he made way for some time with his battle-axe; but that breaking, he drew his sword, and dealt his blows round the circle in which he was inclosed. At length, after performing more than could be naturally expected from a single arm, his sword flying in pieces, he was obliged to surrender himself prisoner. He was conducted to Gloucester; and though at first treated with respect, he was soon after, on some suspicions, thrown into prison, and laid in irons.

Stephen and his party now seemed totally disabled. Matilda was possessed not only of superior power, but also the juster title. She was considered as incontestable sovereign, and the barons came in daily from all quarters to do her homage. The bishop of Winchester himself, who had espoused her cause against his brother, admitted her claims; he led her in procession into his cathedral, and blessed her with the greatest solemnity; the archbishop of Canterbury also swore allegiance; and shortly after an ecclesiastical council, at which none of the laity assisted, except deputies from the city of London, confirmed her pretensions; and she was crowned at Winchester with all imaginable solemnity.

A crown thus every way secured, seemed liable to be shaken by no accidents; yet such is the va-

nity of human security, and such was the great increase of power among the barons, who were in effect masters of those they nominally elected as governors, that Matilda remained but a short time in possession of the throne. This princess, beside the disadvantages of her sex, which weakened her influence over a martial people, was resolved upon repressing the growing power of the nobles, who had left only the shadow of authority to their sovereign. But having neither temper nor policy sufficient to carry her views into execution, she disgusted those by her pride to whom she was obliged for her power. The first petition she refused was the releasement of Stephen; she rejected the remonstrance of the Londoners, who entreated her to mitigate the severe laws of the Norman princes, and revive those of Edward the Confessor. She affected to treat the nobility with a degree of disdain to which they had long been unaccustomed; while the fickle nation once more began to pity their deposed king, and to repent the steps they had taken in her favour. The bishop of Winchester, who probably was never her sincere partisan, was not remiss in fomenting these discontents; and, when he found the people ripe for a tumult, detached a party of his friends and vassals to block up the city of London, where the queen then resided. At the same time measures were taken to instigate the Londoners to a revolt, and to seize her person. Matilda, having timely notice of this conspiracy, fled to Winchester, whither the bishop, still her secret enemy, followed her, watching an opportunity to ruin her

cause. His party was soon sufficiently strong to bid the queen open defiance, and to besiege her in the very place where she first received his benediction. There she continued for some time; but the town being pressed by famine, she was constrained to retreat, while her brother, the earl of Gloucester, endeavouring to follow, was taken prisoner, and exchanged for Stephen, who still continued a captive. Thus a sudden revolution once more took place; Matilda was deposed, and obliged to seek safety in Oxford. Stephen was again recognised as king, and taken from his dungeon to be placed on the throne.

The civil war now broke out afresh, with all its train of devastations. Many were the battles fought, and various the stratagems of those who conducted the affairs of either party. Matilda escaped from Oxford, at a time when the fields were covered with snow, by being dressed all in white, with four knights, her attendants, habited in the same manner. Stephen was upon another occasion surprised by the earl of Gloucester at Wilton, and put to flight. Another time the empress was obliged to quit the kingdom; and the death of the earl of Gloucester soon after, [1147.] who was the soul of her party, gave a dreadful blow to her interests.

Yet the affairs of Stephen continued to fluctuate. Though this monarch had the good fortune to see his rival fly to the continent, and leave him in full possession of the kingdom; though his brother was possessed of the highest authority among the clergy; he was still insecure. Finding

that the castles built by the noblemen of his own party encouraged a spirit of independence, and were little less dangerous than those which remained in the hands of the enemy, he endeavoured to gain these; and this attempt united many of his own adherents against him. This discontent was increased by the opposition of the clergy, who, from having been on his side, began to declare loudly in favour of his opponents. The pope laid his whole party under an interdict, for his having refused to send deputies, to be named by himself, to the general council at Rheims. By this sentence, which was now first practised in England, divine service was prohibited, and all the offices of religion ceased, except baptism and extreme unction. This state of Stephen's affairs looked so unpromising, that a revolution was once more expected; when his submission to the see of Rome for a while suspended the threatened blow.

Stephen had hitherto been opposed only by men who seconded the pretensions of another, and who consequently wanted that popularity which those have who fight their own cause. But he was now to enter the lists with a new opposer, who was every day coming to maturity, and growing more formidable. This was Henry, the son of Matilda, who had completed his sixteenth year, [1149.] and gave the greatest hopes of being one day a valiant leader and a consummate politician. It was usual in those days for young noblemen to receive the honour of knighthood before they were permitted to carry arms; and

Henry proposed to receive his admission from his great uncle, David, king of Scotland. With this view, and in hopes of once more inspiring his mother's party, he landed in England with a great retinue of knights and soldiers, accompanied by many noblemen as well English as foreigners. The ceremony was performed by the Scotish king at Carlisle, amidst a multitude of people assembled on this occasion, who all, pleased with the vigour, the address, and still more perhaps with the youth of the prince, secretly began to wish for a revolution in his favour. Soon after his return to Normandy, he was, by his mother's consent, invested with that duchy, which had some time before revolted to her. He was also, upon the death of his father Geoffrey Plantagenet, secured in the possession of his dominions; and, to add still more to his increasing power, he married Eleanor, the daughter and heiress of the duke of Guienne and Poictou; and took possession of those extensive territories.

With this great accession of power, young Henry now resolved to reclaim his hereditary kingdom, and to dispute Stephen's usurped pretensions. For this purpose, being previously assured of the dispositions of the majority of the people in his favour, he invaded England, where he was immediately joined by [1153.] almost all the barons in the kingdom. Though it was the middle of winter, he advanced to besiege Malmsbury, and took the town, after having worsted a body of the enemy that attempted to oppose his march. Soon after, Reading, and

above thirty other fortresses, submitted without resistance.

In the mean time Stephen, alarmed at the power and popularity of his young rival, tried every method to anticipate the purpose of his invasion, by depriving him of a succession which he so earnestly sought. He had convoked a council in London, where he proposed his own son Eustace, who was but a weak prince, as his associate in government, as well as his successor. He had even expressed a desire of immediately proceeding to the coronation; but was mortified to find that the archbishop of Canterbury refused to perform the ceremony. It was then no time to prosecute his resentment, when his rival was making hasty strides to the throne; wherefore, finding that Henry was advancing with a rapid progress, he marched with all possible diligence to oppose him, while he was besieging Wallingford; and coming in sight, he rested his army to prepare for battle. In this situation the two armies remained for some time, within a quarter of a mile of each other, a decisive action being every day expected. While they continued thus in anxious expectation, a treaty was set on foot, by the interposition of William earl of Arundel, for terminating the dispute without blood. The death of Stephen's son, which happened during the course of the treaty, facilitated its conclusion. It was therefore agreed by all parties, that Stephen should reign during life, and that justice should be administered in his name; that, on his death, Henry should succeed to the kingdom; and William, Stephen's son,

should inherit Boulogne and his patrimonial estate. After all the barons had sworn to this treaty, which filled the kingdom with joy, Henry evacuated England, and Stephen returned to the peaceable enjoyment of his throne. His reign, however, was closed about a year after the treaty. He died at Canterbury, and was interred in the abbey of Feversham. Oct. 25, 1154.

The fortune of many princes gives them, with posterity, the reputation of wisdom and virtue. Stephen wanted success in all his schemes but that of ascending the throne; and consequently his virtues and abilities now remain doubtful. If we estimate them by the happiness of his subjects, they will appear in a very despicable light; for England was never more miserable than during his reign; but if we consider them as they appear in his private conduct, few monarchs can boast more. Active, generous, and brave, his sole aim was to destroy a vile aristocracy that oppressed the people; but the abilities of no man, however politic or intrepid, were then sufficient to resist an evil that was too firmly supported by power. The faults, therefore, of this monarch's reign are entirely to be imputed to the ungovernable spirit of the people; but his virtues were his own.

CHAPTER IX.

HENRY II.

WE have hitherto seen the barons and clergy becoming powerful, in proportion to the weakness of the monarch's title to the crown, and enriching themselves with the spoils of enfeebled majesty. Henry Plantagenet had now every right, from hereditary succession, from universal assent, from power, and personal merit, to make sure of the throne, and to keep its prerogatives unimpaired. He was employed in besieging a castle of one of his mutinous barons upon the continent, when intelligence was brought him of Stephen's death; but, sensible of the security of his claims in England, he would not relinquish his enterprise till he had reduced the place. He then set out on his journey, and was received in England with the acclamations of the people, who, harassed with supporting opposite pretensions, were now rejoiced to see all parties united.

The first act of Henry's government gave the people a happy omen of his future administration. Conscious of his strength, he began to correct those abuses, and to resume those privileges which had been extorted from the weakness or the credulity of his predecessors. He immediately dismissed all those mercenary soldiers who had committed infinite disorders in the nation. He ordered all the castles which had been erected since the death of Henry the First, and were become receptacles of rapine, to be demolished, except a

few which he retained in his own hands for the protection of the kingdom. The adulterated coin was cried down, and new money struck of the right value and standard. He resumed many of those benefactions which had been made to churches and monasteries in the former reigns. He gave charters to several towns, by which the citizens claimed their freedom and privileges, independent of any superior but himself. These charters were the ground-work of English liberty. The struggles which had before this time been, whether the king, or the barons, or the clergy, should be despotic over the people, now began to assume a new aspect; and a fourth order, namely, that of the more opulent of the people, began to claim a share in the administration. Thus was the feudal government at first impaired; and liberty began to be more equally diffused throughout the nation.

From this happy commencement England once more began to respire; agriculture returned with security; and every individual seemed to enjoy the happy effects of the young king's wise administration. Not but that some slight commotions proceeded from many of the depressed barons, who were quickly brought to a sense of their duty; as also from the Welch, who made several incursions; but these were at last obliged to make submission, and to return to their natural fastnesses. To such a state of tranquillity was the whole kingdom brought in a very short time, that Henry thought his presence no longer necessary to preserve order at home, and therefore made an expe-

dition to the continent, where his affairs were in some disorder.

As the transactions of the continent do not properly fall within the limits of this scanty page, it will be sufficient to say, that Henry's valour and prudence seconding his ambition, he soon extended his power in that part of his dominions, and found himself, either by marriage or hereditary claims, master of a third part of the French monarchy. He possessed, in right of his father, Anjou and Touraine; in that of his mother, Normandy and Maine; in that of his wife, Guienne, Poictou, Saintonge, Auvergne, Perigord, Angoumois, and the Limousin; to which he shortly after added Bretagne, by marrying his son, who was yet a child, to the heiress of that dukedom, who was yet a child also; and thus securing that province, under pretence of being his son's guardian. It was in vain that Lewis the Younger, king of France, opposed his growing power; and several ineffectual engagements served only to prove that little was to be acquired by force. A cessation of arms, therefore, was at first concluded between them, and, soon after, a peace, which was brought about by the pope's mediation.

Henry, being thus become the most powerful prince of his age, the undisputed monarch of England, possessed of more than a third of France, and having humbled the barons that attempted to circumscribe his power, naturally expected to reign with very little opposition for the future. But it happened otherwise. He found the severest mortifications from a quarter where he least ex-

pected resistance. Though he had diminished the power of the barons, he was sensible that the temporal influence of the clergy was still gaining ground; and was grown to such a pitch as would shortly annihilate the authority of the sovereign himself.

They now seemed resolved not only to be exempted from the ordinary taxes of the state, but to be secured from its punishments also. They had extorted an immunity from all but ecclesiastical penalties, during the last distracted reign; and they continued to maintain that grant in the present. It may easily be supposed, that a law which thus screened their guilt, contributed to increase it; and we accordingly find upon record not less than a hundred murders committed by men in holy orders, in the short period since the king's accession, not one of which was punished even with degradation; while the bishops themselves seemed to glory in this horrid indulgence.

The mild character and advanced age of Theobald, archbishop of Canterbury, together with his merits, in refusing to put the crown on the head of Eustace, the son of Stephen, prevented Henry, during his life-time, from any attempts to repress the vices of his clergy; but, after his death, he resolved to exert himself with more activity. For this purpose, and that he might be secure [1162.]
against any opposition, he advanced to that dignity Thomas à Becket, on whose compliance he supposed he could entirely depend.

The famous Thomas à Becket, the first man of English extraction who had, since the Norman

conquest, risen to any share of power, was the son of a citizen of London. Having received his early education in the schools of that metropolis, he resided some time at Paris; and on his return became clerk in the sheriff's office. In that station he was recommended to the archbishop of Canterbury, and behaved with so much prudence, that he obtained from that prelate some beneficial dignities in the church. Thomas, however, was not contented with moderate preferment, and resolved to fit himself for a higher station in life, by travelling to Italy, where he studied the civil law at Bologna. On his return, he appeared to have made so great a proficiency in knowledge, that he was promoted by his patron to the archdeaconry of Canterbury, an office of considerable trust and profit. On the accession of Henry to the throne, he was recommended to that monarch as worthy of great preferment; and the king, finding, on further acquaintance, that his spirit and abilities entitled him to the highest trusts, soon promoted him to the dignity of chancellor, the first civil office in the kingdom. Preferments were now heaped upon him without number. He was made provost of Beverley, dean of Hastings, and constable of the Tower. He was put in possession of the honours of Eye and Berkham; and, to complete his grandeur, he was intrusted with the education of prince Henry, son and heir to the king. His revenues were immense; his expenses were incredible. He kept open table for persons of all ranks. The most costly luxuries were provided for his entertainments. The pomp

of his retinue, the sumptuousness of his furniture, and the munificence of his presents, corresponded with the greatness of his preferments. His apartments exhibited an odd mixture of the rudeness of the times and the splendour of his station; they glittered with gold and silver plate, and yet were covered with hay or clean straw in winter, and with green boughs or rushes in summer, for the ease of his reclining guests. A considerable number of knights were retained in his service, and the greatest barons were fond of being received at his table; the king himself frequently condescended to partake of his entertainments. He employed two-and-fifty clerks in keeping accounts of the vacant prelacies and his own ecclesiastical preferments. When he crossed the sea, he was always attended with five ships; and in an embassy to Paris, he appeared with a thousand persons in his retinue, displaying such wealth as amazed the spectators. As he was but in deacon's orders, he declined few of the amusements then in fashion. He diverted himself with hawking, hunting, chess-playing, and tilting; at which he was so expert, that even the most approved knights dreaded his encounter. His familiarity with the king is ascertained by a story told of their happening to meet a beggar, as they were riding together through London. "Would it not be right," said the king, casting his eyes on a poor wretch that was shivering with cold, "to clothe that man in this severe season?" "Certainly," replied his chancellor; "and you do right in considering his calamity." "If so," cried the king, "he shall have a coat

instantly;" and without more delay he began to pull off the chancellor's coat with violence. The chancellor defended himself for some time; but after a struggle, in which both were near falling to the ground, he gave up his coat, and the king gave it to the beggar, who, ignorant of the quality of his benefactors, was not a little surprised with his good fortune. Such was the deportment of Becket, while he was chancellor; but when, contrary to the advice of Matilda, he was promoted to the archbishopric of Canterbury, his whole conduct took a new turn. No sooner was he fixed in this high station, which rendered him for life the second person in the kingdom, than he endeavoured to retrieve the character of sanctity which his former levities might have seemed to oppose. Without consulting his master's pleasure, he sent him the seals of his office as lord-chancellor, pretending that he was henceforth to be employed in matters of a more sacred nature. Though he still retained the pomp and splendour of his retinue, he was in his own person the most mortified man that could be seen. He wore sackcloth next his skin. He changed it so seldom, that it was filled with dirt and vermin. His usual diet was bread; his drink, water, which he rendered further unpalatable by the mixture of unsavoury herbs. His back was mangled with frequent discipline. He every day washed on his knees the feet of thirteen beggars. Every one that made profession of sanctity was admitted to his conversation; and his aspect wore the appearance of mortification and secret sorrow. To these mortifications he sa-

crificed all the comforts of life; and it would be unjust to suppose but that he thought them really meritorious.

Henry now saw, when it was too late, the ambitious superiority which Becket aimed at. His resignation of the chancellor's office served to raise his suspicions how much he was mistaken in the pliancy of Becket's disposition; but he was soon after convinced, when this churchman, now made archbishop, began to revive some ancient claims to several church-lands that had lain dormant ever since the Conquest. Henry, indeed, prevailed upon him to desist from one or two of these claims; but he found, for the future, that he was to expect, in the seemingly easy Becket, a most obstinate and turbulent opposer to all his schemes of humbling the clergy.

Notwithstanding this unexpected opposition, Henry was resolved to try every expedient to rectify the errors that had crept in among the clergy, who, under a pretence of independence upon secular power, were grown most abominably licentious. During the preceding reign, a great number of idle and illiterate persons, in order to enjoy the indulgence of their vices, had entered into holy orders; for the bishops seldom rejected any who presented themselves. These having no benefices, and belonging to no diocese, and consequently subject to no jurisdiction, committed the most flagrant enormities with impunity. Among other inventions of the clergy to obtain money, that of selling pardons was introduced, and had become a revenue to the priests. These and the like grievances bore hard

upon the people, who were at the same time taught that their only remedy was implicit submission. A prince of Henry's excellent penetration easily pierced through the mist of ignorance in which the age was involved: and he resolved, by a bold struggle, to free the laity from these clerical usurpations. An opportunity soon offered, that gave him a popular pretext for beginning his intended reformation. A man in holy orders had debauched the daughter of a gentleman in Worcestershire, and then murdered the father, to prevent the effects of his resentment. The atrocity of the crime produced a spirit of indignation among the people; and the king insisted that the assassin should be tried by the civil magistrate. This Becket opposed, alleging the privileges of the church; and ordered the criminal to be confined in the bishop's prison, lest be should be seized by the officers of the king. It was to no purpose that the king desired he might be tried first by an ecclesiastical jurisdiction, and then delivered up to the secular tribunal. Becket asserted that it was unjust to try a man twice for the same offence; and appealed for the equity of his opinions to the court of Rome. This, however, was the time for Henry to make his boldest attack upon the immunities of the church, when, to defend itself, it must also espouse the cause of the most atrocious of criminals. He therefore summoned an assembly of all the prelates in England, and desired that the murderer should be delivered over to the hands of justice, and a law made to punish such delinquents for the future. Becket retired with the prelates to deliberate; but, as he directed the assembly, they

entrenched themselves behind the papal decrees, and refused to give up their prisoner. Henry, willing to bring them to an open absurdity, demanded, whether they were willing or not to submit to the ancient laws and customs of the kingdom? To this they replied with equal art, that they were willing, except where their own order was concerned. The king, provoked past bearing by this evasive answer, instantly quitted the assembly, and sent Becket orders to surrender the honours and castles which he continued to hold in consequence of having been chancellor. These being surrendered, the prelate quitted London without taking the least notice of the assembly.

Labouring for some time under the uncertainty of the king's displeasure, Becket was soon after induced to give way, and to promise his majesty, without reserve, a steady observance of the ancient laws and customs of the kingdom. This was the disposition which the king wished to retain him in; and he therefore summoned a general council of the nobility and prelates at Clarendon, to whom he submitted this great and important affair, and desired their concurrence. [1164.] These councils seem, at that time, convened rather to give authenticity to the king's decrees, than to enact laws that were to bind their posterity. A number of regulations were there drawn up, which were afterwards well known under the title of the Constitutions of Clarendon, and were then voted without opposition. By these regulations it was enacted, that clergymen accused of anr crime should be tried in the civil courts; that laymen should not be

tried in the spiritual courts, except by legal and reputable witnesses; that the king should ultimately judge in ecclesiastical and spiritual appeals; that the archbishops and bishops should be regarded as barons, and obliged to furnish the public supplies, as usual with persons of their rank; that the goods forfeited to the king should not be protected in churches or church-yards by the clergy; and that the sons of villains should not take orders without the consent of their lord. These, with some others of less consequence, or implied in the above, to the number of sixteen, were readily subscribed by all the bishops present; and Becket himself, who at first showed some reluctance, added his name to the number. It only remained that the pope should ratify them; but there Henry was mistaken. Alexander III. who was then pope, condemned them in the strongest terms, abrogated, annulled, and rejected them: out of sixteen he admitted only six, which he thought not important enough to deserve censure.

How Henry could suppose the pope would give consent to these articles, which must infallibly have destroyed his whole authority in the kingdom, is not easy to conceive; but we may well suppose, that a man of Becket's character must be extremely mortified at finding that he had signed what the pope had refused to confirm. Accordingly, on this occasion, he expressed the deepest sorrow for his former concessions. He redoubled his austerities, in order to punish himself for his criminal compliance; and refused to officiate at the altar till he had obtained absolution from his holiness. All

these mortifications appeared to Henry as little more than specious insults upon himself; his former affection was converted into hatred, and the breach between him and the archbishop every day grew wider. At last, willing to supersede the prelate's authority at any rate, he desired that the pope would send a legate into his dominions; who, from the nature of his commission, might have a superior control. This the pope readily granted; and a legate was appointed, but with a clause annexed to his commission, that he was to execute nothing in prejudice of the archbishop. An authority thus clogged in that very part where it was desired to be unlimited, was no way agreeable to the king; and he sent back the commission with great indignation. He now, therefore, went another way to wreak his resentment upon Becket. He had him sued for some lands, which were part of a manor belonging to his primacy; and the primate being detained by sickness from coming into court, his non-attendance was construed into disrespect. A great council was summoned, at Northampton, where Becket defended his cause in person; but he was condemned as guilty of a contempt of the king's court, and as wanting in that fealty which he had sworn to his sovereign. All his goods and chattels were confiscated; and the bishop of Winchester was obliged to pronounce the sentence against him. Besides this conviction, the king exhibited another charge against him for three hundred pounds, which he had levied on the honours of Eye and Berkham, while he remained in possession. Becket, rather than aggravate the king's resentment,

agreed to give sureties for the payment. The next day another suit was commenced against him for a thousand marks, which the king had lent him on some former occasion. Immediately on the back of these, a third claim was made, still greater than the former; this was to give an account of the money he had received and expended during the time of his chancellorship. The estimate was laid at no less than forty thousand marks; and Becket was wholly unprovided either with the means of balancing his accounts, or with securities for answering so great a demand. In this exigence his friends were divided what counsel to give. Some prelates advised him to resign his see, in hopes of an acquittal; some counselled him to throw himself entirely upon the king's mercy; and some, to offer ten thousand marks as a general satisfaction for all demands. Becket followed none of these opinions; but with an intrepidity peculiar to himself, arraying himself in his episcopal vestments, with the cross in his hand, he went forward to the king's palace, and, entering the royal apartments, sat down, holding up his cross as his banner of protection. The king, who sat in an inner room, ordered by proclamation the prelates and the nobility to attend him; to whom he complained loudly of Becket's insolence and inflammatory proceedings. The whole council joined in condemning this instance of his unaccountable pride; and determined to expostulate with him upon his inconsistency, in formerly subscribing the Constitutions of Clarendon, and now in being the first to infringe them. But all their messages, threats, and arguments, were to no purpose: Becket

had taken his resolution, and it was now too late to attempt to shake it. He put himself, in the most solemn manner, under the protection of the supreme pontiff; and appealed to him against any penalty which his iniquitous judges might think proper to inflict. Then departing the palace, he asked the king's immediate permission to leave Northampton; and upon receiving a refusal, he secretly withdrew in disguise, and at last found means to cross over to the continent.

Here it may be natural to inquire how a person of such mean extraction should be able to form any kind of opposition to so powerful a monarch as Henry? But the state was then, as it was for some ages after, composed of three distinct powers, all pursuing separate interests, and very little dependent upon each other. These were, that of the king, that of the barons, and that of the clergy; for as yet the people had scarce any influence, separately considered. Of these three powers the most recent was that of the clergy, which, wanting the sanction of prescriptive right, endeavoured to make up those defects by superior arts of popularity. They therefore attached the people, who had hitherto been considered as unworthy of notice in the constitution, to their party; and thus gained an acquisition of strength that was often too powerful for the other two members of the state. The king, being but a single person, could have no wide connexions among the lower orders of mankind; the nobles being bred up in a haughty independence, were taught to regard the inferior ranks as slaves: the clergy alone, by their duty, being obliged to

converse with the lowest as well as the highest orders, were most beloved by the populace, who, since they were at any rate to be slaves, were the more willing to obey men who conversed with them, and who seemed to study their welfare, than such as kept them at a humiliating distance, and only regarded them as the instruments of their private ambition. For these reasons therefore, during the times we speak of, the side of the clergy was always espoused by the people; and Becket, upon the present occasion, secretly relied on their encouragement and support.

The intrepidity of Becket, joined to his apparent sanctity, gained him a very favourable reception upon the continent, both from the people and their governors. The king of France, who hated Henry, very much affected to pity his condition; and the pope, whose cause he had so strenuously defended, honoured him with the greatest marks of distinction, while he treated Henry's ambassadors with coolness and contempt. Becket, sensible of his power, was willing to show all possible humility; and even resigned his see of Canterbury into the pope's hands, in order to receive it back from him with greater solemnity, and with an investiture of more apparent sanctity. Such favours bestowed upon an exile, and a perjured traitor, for such had been his sentence of condemnation in England, excited the indignation of Henry beyond measure. He saw his ambassadors slighted, all his endeavours to procure a conference with the pope frustrated, and his subjects daily excited to discontents, in consequence of the king's severity to a sanctified

character. In this state of resentment, Henry resolved to throw off all dependence upon the pontiff at once, and to free himself and his people from a burthen that had long oppressed them without pity. He accordingly issued orders to his justiciaries, inhibiting, under severe penalties, all appeals to the pope or the archbishop; and forbidding any of them to receive mandates from them, or to apply to their authority. He declared it treasonable to bring over from either of them any interdict upon the kingdom. This he made punishable in secular clergymen by the loss of their eyes and by castration; in regulars, by the amputation of their feet; and in laymen, by death.

The pope and the archbishop were not remiss on their side to retort these fulminations, and to shake the very foundation of the king's authority. Becket compared himself to Christ, who had been condemned by a lay tribunal, and who was crucified anew in the present oppressions under which the church laboured. But he did not rest in complaints only; he issued out a censure, excommunicating the king's chief ministers by name, all that were concerned in sequestering the revenues of his see, and all who obeyed or favoured the Constitutions of Clarendon. He even threatened to excommunicate the king himself if he did not immediately repent; and to give his censures the greater energy, he got them to be ratified by the pope.

Whatever Henry's contempt of these fulminations might be in the beginning, he, after some deliberation, began to find them more formidable than he had supposed, and secretly wished for an ac-

commodation. Yet there seemed no other way of terminating these disputes, but by the king's appealing to the pope, as umpire between him and the archbishop; and this promised no very favourable decision. However, perceiving that his authority was beginning to decline among his subjects, and that his rivals on the continent had actually availed themselves of his perplexities, he resolved at any rate to apply to the pope for his mediation. The pope, on the other hand, was every day threatened himself by the machinations of an antipope. He was apprehensive that the king of England might join against him; he knew his great abilities, and was sensible that, as yet, no insurrection had been made in consequence of the threats and exhortations of Becket. Thus the disposition of both parties produced frequent attempts towards an accommodation; but their mutual jealousies, and their anxiety not to lose the least advantage in the negociation, often protracted this desirable treaty. At one time the terms being agreed on, were postponed by the king's refusing to sign, but with a salvo to his royal dignity. At another time they were accommodated, but were broken off by Becket's refusing to submit but with a salvo to the honour of God. A third and a fourth negociation followed without effect. In this last all the terms were completely adjusted, when Becket took it into his head to demand a kiss of peace. This the king refused to grant; and both parties once more prepared for mutual annoyance.

These disturbances continued for some time

longer: Becket never losing an opportunity of impeaching the king's ministers, and obstructing all his measures. At length, by the mediation of the pope's legate, all difficulties were adjusted; and while the king allowed Becket to return, that prelate consented to wave the kiss of peace. The ceremonial of the interview being regulated, when the archbishop approached, the king advanced to meet him in the most gracious manner; and conversed with him for some time with great ease, familiarity, and kindness. All material points being adjusted, Becket attended Henry on horseback; and as they rode together, the prelate begged some satisfaction from the invasions of his right by the archbishop of York, who had some time before crowned the young prince. To this Henry replied, that what was past could not be undone; but that he would take care that none but he should crown the young queen, which ceremony was soon to be performed. Becket, transported at this instance of the king's condescension, alighted instantly, and threw himself at the feet of his sovereign, who, leaping from his horse at the same time, lifted him from the ground, and helped him to remount. The terms of their present agreement were very advantageous to the prelate; and this might have inspired him, in the ardour of his gratitude, to such a humiliation. It was agreed that he should not give up any of the rights of the church, or resign any of those pretensions which had been the original ground of the quarrel; that Becket and his adherents should be restored to their livings; and that all such possessors of bene- [1170.]

fices belonging to the see of Canterbury as had been installed since the primate's absence, should be expelled, and Becket have liberty to supply the vacancies. In return for these concessions the king only reaped the advantage of seeing his ministers absolved from the sentence of excommunication, and of preventing an interdict which was preparing to be laid upon all his dominions.

Becket having thus, in some measure, triumphed over the king, was resolved to remit nothing of the power which he had acquired. He soon began to show, that not even a temporary tranquillity was to be the result of his reconciliation. Nothing could exceed the insolence with which he conducted himself upon his first landing in England. Instead of retiring quietly to his diocese with that modesty which became a man just pardoned by his king, he made a progress through Kent in all the splendour and magnificence of a sovereign pontiff. As he approached Southwark, the clergy, the laity, men of all ranks and ages, came forth to meet him, and celebrated his triumphal entry with hymns of joy. Thus confident of the voice and the hearts of the people, he began to launch forth his thunders against those who had been his former opposers. The archbishop of York, who had crowned Henry's eldest son in his absence, was the first against whom he denounced sentence of suspension. The bishops of London and Salisbury he actually excommunicated. Robert de Broc and Nigel de Sackville were exposed to the same censures; and many of the most considerable prelates and ministers, who had assisted at the late corona-

tion of the young prince, were partakers of the common calamity. One man he excommunicated for having spoken against him; and another for having cut off the tail of one of his horses.

Henry was then in Normandy, while the primate was thus triumphantly parading through the kingdom; and it was not without the utmost indignation that he received information of his turbulent insolence. When the suspended and excommunicated prelates arrived with their complaints, his anger knew no bounds. He broke forth into the most acrimonious expressions against that arrogant churchman, whom he had raised from the lowest station to be the plague of his life, and the continual disturber of his government. The archbishop of York remarked to him, that so long as Becket lived, he could never expect to enjoy peace or tranquillity; and the king himself burst out into an exclamation, that he had no friends about him, or he would not so long have been exposed to the insults of that ungrateful hypocrite. These words excited the attention of the whole court, and armed four of his most resolute attendants to gratify their monarch's secret inclinations. The names of these knights and gentlemen of his household were Reginald Fitz-Urse, William de Tracy, Hugh de Morville, and Richard Brito, who immediately communicated their thoughts to each other. They instantly bound themselves by an oath to revenge their king's quarrel; and secretly retiring from court, took shipping at different ports, and met the next day at the castle of Saltwode, within six miles of Canterbury. Some menacing expressions which

they had dropped, and their sudden departure, gave the king reason to suspect their design. He therefore sent messengers to overtake and forbid them, in his name, to commit any violence; but these orders arrived too late to prevent their fatal purpose. The conspirators, being joined by some assistants at the place of their meeting, proceeded to Canterbury with all the haste their bloody intentions required. Advancing directly to Becket's house, and entering his apartment, they reproached him very fiercely for the rashness and the insolence of his conduct; as if they had been willing to enjoy his terrors before they destroyed him. Becket, however, was not in the least terrified; but vindicated his actions with that zeal and resolution, which nothing probably but the consciousness of his innocence could inspire. The conspirators felt the force of his replies; and were particularly enraged at a charge of ingratitude, which he objected to three of them, who had been formerly retained in his service. During this altercation, the time approached for Becket to assist at vespers, whither he went unguarded, the conspirators following, and preparing for their attempt. As soon as he had reached the altar, where it is just to think he aspired at the glory of martyrdom, they all fell upon him; and when they had cloven his head with repeated blows, he dropped down dead before the altar of St. Benedict, which was besmeared with his blood and brains.

The circumstances of the murder, the place where it was perpetrated, and the fortitude with which the prelate resigned himself to his fate, made

a surprising impression on the people. No sooner was his death known than they rushed into the church to see the body; and dipping their hands in his blood, crossed themselves with it as with that of a saint. The clergy, whose interest it was to have Becket considered as a saint, and many of whom were perhaps sincere in their belief, considering the times we treat of, did all that lay in their power to magnify his sanctity, to extol the merits of his martyrdom, and to hold him out as the fittest object of the veneration of the people. Their endeavours soon prevailed. Innumerable were the miracles said to be wrought at his tomb; for when the people are brought to see a miracle, they generally find or make one. It was not sufficient that his shrine had the power of restoring dead men to life; it restored also cows, dogs, and horses. It was reported, and believed, that he rose from his coffin before he was buried, to light the tapers designed for his funeral: nor was he remiss, when the funeral ceremony was over, in stretching forth his hands to give his benediction to the people. Thus Becket became a saint; and the king was strongly suspected of procuring his assassination.

Nothing could exceed the king's consternation upon receiving the first news of this prelate's catastrophe. He was instantly sensible that the murder would be ultimately imputed to him. He was apprised that his death would effect what his opposition could not do, and would procure those advantages to the church which it had been the study of his whole reign to refuse. These considerations

gave him the most unfeigned concern. He shut himself up in darkness, refusing even the attendance of his domestics. He even rejected, during three days, all nourishment. The courtiers, dreading the effects of his regret, were at last obliged to break into his solitude, in order to persuade him to be reconciled to a measure that he could not redress. The pope soon after, being made sensible of the king's innocence, granted him his pardon; but upon condition that he would make every future submission, and perform every injunction that the holy see should require. All things being thus adjusted, the assassins who had murdered Becket retired in safety to the enjoyment of their former dignities and honours; and the king, in order to divert the minds of the people to a different object, undertook an expedition against Ireland.

Ireland was at that time nearly in the same situation in which England had been after the first invasion of the Saxons. Its inhabitants had been early converted to Christianity; and, for three or four centuries after, possessed a very large proportion of the learning of the times: being undisturbed by foreign invasions, and perhaps too poor to invite the rapacity of conquerors, they enjoyed a peaceful life, which they gave up to piety, and such learning as was then thought necessary to promote it. Of their learning, their arts, their piety, and even their polished manners, too many monuments remain to this day for us to make the least doubt concerning them; but it is equally true, that in time they fell from these advantages; and their degenerate posterity, at the period we are now speak-

ing of, were involved in the darkest barbarity. This may be imputed to the frequent invasions which they suffered from the Danes and Norwegians, who overran the whole country, and every where spread their ravages, and confirmed their authority. The natives, kept in the strictest bondage, grew every day more ignorant and brutal; and when at last they rose upon their conquerors, and totally expelled them the island, they wanted instructors to restore them to their former attainments. Henceforward they long continued in the most deplorable state of barbarism. The towns that had been formerly built were suffered to fall into ruin; the inhabitants exercised pasture in the open country, and sought protection from danger by retiring into their forests and bogs. Almost all sense of religion was extinguished; the petty princes exercised continual outrages upon each other's territories; and strength alone was able to procure redress.

At the time when Henry first planned the invasion of the island, it was divided into five small kingdoms, namely, Leinster, Meath, Munster, Ulster, and Connaught. As it had been usual for one or other of the five kings to take the lead in their wars, he was denominated monarch of the island, and possessed a power resembling that of the early Saxon monarchs in England. Roderic O'Connor, king of Connaught, then enjoyed this dignity, and Dermot M'Morrogh was king of Leinster. This last-named prince, a weak, licentious tyrant, had carried off and ravished the daughter of the king of Meath, who, being strengthened by

the alliance of the king of Connaught, invaded the ravisher's dominions, and expelled him from his kingdom. This prince, thus justly punished, had recourse to Henry, who was at that time in Guienne, and offered to hold his kingdom of the English crown, if he should recover it by the king's assistance. Henry readily accepted the offer; but being at that time embarrassed by more near interests, he only gave Dermot letters-patent, by which he empowered all his subjects to aid the Irish prince in the recovery of his dominions. Dermot, relying on this authority, repaired to Bristol, where, after some difficulty, he formed a treaty with Richard, surnamed Strongbow, earl of Pembroke, who agreed to reinstate him in his dominions, upon condition of his being married to his daughter Eva, and declared heir of all his territory. He at the same time contracted for succours with Robert Fitzstephen, and Maurice Fitzgerald, whom he promised to gratify with the city of Wexford, and the two adjoining districts, which were then in possession of the Easterlings, or descendants of the Norwegians. Being thus assured of assistance, he returned privately to Ireland, and concealed himself during the winter in the monastery of Fernes, which he had founded. Robert Fitzstephen was first able, the ensuing spring, to fulfil his engagements, by landing with thirty knights, sixty esquires, and three hundred archers. They were soon after joined by Maurice Prendergast, who, about the same time, brought over ten knights and sixty archers; and with this small force they resolved on besieging Wexford, which

was to be theirs by treaty. This town was quickly reduced; and the adventurers, being reinforced by another body of men, to the amount of a hundred and fifty, under the command of Maurice Fitzgerald, composed an army that struck the barbarous natives with awe. Roderic, the chief monarch of the island, ventured to oppose them, but he was defeated; and soon after the prince of Ossory was obliged to submit, and give hostages for his future conduct.

Dermot being thus reinstated in his hereditary dominions, soon began to conceive hopes of extending the limits of his power, and making himself master of Ireland. With these views he endeavoured to expedite Strongbow, who, being personally prohibited by the king, had not yet come over. Dermot tried to inflame his ambition by the glory of the conquest, and his avarice by the advantages it would procure: he expatiated on the cowardice of the natives, and the certainty of his success. Strongbow first sent over Raymond, one of his retinue, with ten knights and seventy archers; and receiving permission shortly after for himself, he landed with two hundred horse and a hundred archers. All these English forces, now joining together, became irresistible; and though the whole number did not amount to a thousand, yet, such was the barbarous state of the natives, that they were every where put to the rout. The city of Waterford quickly surrendered; Dublin was taken by assault; and Strongbow, marrying Eva, according to treaty, became master of the kingdom of Leinster upon Dermot's decease.

The island being thus in a manner wholly subdued, for nothing was capable of opposing the progress of the English arms, Henry became jealous of the success of the adventurers, and was willing to share in person those honours which they had already secured. He therefore shortly after landed in Ireland, at the head of five [1171.] hundred knights, and some soldiers; not so much to conquer a disputed territory, as to take possession of a subject kingdom. In his progress through the country, he received the homage of the petty chieftains, and left most of them in possession of their ancient territories. In a place so uncultivated, and so ill peopled, there was still land enough to satisfy the adventurers who had followed him. Strongbow was made seneschal of Ireland; Hugh de Lacey was made governor of Dublin, and John de Courcy received a patent for conquering the province of Ulster, which yet remained unsubdued. The Irish bishops very gladly admitted the English, as they expected from their superior civilisation a greater degree of reverence and respect. Pope Adrian IV. had, in the beginning, encouraged Henry to subdue the Irish by his bull, granting him the kingdom. Pope Alexander III. now confirmed him in his conquest; and the kings of England were acknowledged as lords over Ireland for ever. Thus, after a trifling effort, in which very little money was expended, and little blood shed, that beautiful island became an appendage to the English crown, and as such it has ever since continued with unshaken fidelity.

The joy which this conquest diffused was very

great; and Henry seemed now to have attained the summit of his wishes. He was now undisputed monarch of the greatest domain in Europe; father of a numerous progeny, that gave both lustre and authority to his crown; victorious over all his enemies, and cheerfully obeyed by all his subjects. Henry, his eldest son, had been anointed king, and was acknowledged as undoubted successor; Richard, his second son, was invested with the duchy of Guienne and Poictou; Geoffrey, his third son, inherited, in right of his wife, the duchy of Bretagne; and John, his youngest, was designed as king in Ireland. Such was the flattering prospect of grandeur before him; but such is the instability of human happiness, that this very exaltation of his family proved the means of embittering his future life, and disturbing his government.

Among the few vices ascribed to this monarch, unlimited gallantry was one. Queen Eleanor, whom he married from motives of ambition, and who had been divorced from her former royal consort for her incontinence, was long become disagreeable to Henry; and he sought in others those satisfactions he could not find with her. Among the number of his mistresses we have the name of Fair Rosamond, whose personal charms, and premature death, make so conspicuous a figure in the romances and the ballads of this period. It is true, that the severity of criticism has rejected most of these accounts as fabulous; but even well-known fables, when much celebrated, make a part of the history, at least of the manners, of the age.

Rosamond Clifford is said to have been the most beautiful woman that ever was seen in England, if what romances and poets assert be true. Henry loved her with a long and faithful attachment; and in order to secure her from the resentment of his queen, who, from having been formerly incontinent herself, now became jealous of his incontinence, he concealed her in a labyrinth in Woodstock Park, where he passed in her company his hours of vacancy and pleasure. How long this secret intercourse continued we are not informed. It was not, however, so closely concealed but that it came to the queen's knowledge, who, as the accounts add, being guided by a clue of silk to her fair rival's retreat, obliged her, by holding a drawn dagger to her breast, to swallow poison. Whatever may be the veracity of this story, certain it is, that this haughty woman, though formerly offensive by her own gallantries, was now no less so by her jealousy; and she it was who first sowed the seeds of dissension between the king and his children.

Young Henry was taught to believe himself injured, when, upon being crowned as partner in the kingdom, he was not admitted to a share of the administration. This prince had, from the beginning, shown a degree of pride that seems to have been hereditary to all the Norman succession: when the ceremony of his coronation was performing, the king, willing to give it all the splendour possible, waited upon him at table; and while he offered him the cup, observed, that no prince ever before had been so magnificently attended.

"There is nothing very extraordinary," replied the young prince, "in seeing the son of a count serving the son of a king." From this instance, nothing seemed great enough to satisfy his ambition; and he took the first opportunity to assert his aspiring pretensions. The discontent of young Henry was soon followed by that of Geoffrey and Richard, whom the queen persuaded to assert their title to the territories assigned them; and, upon the king's refusing their undutiful demands, they all fled secretly to the court of France, where Lewis, who was instrumental in increasing their disobedience, gave them countenance and protection. Queen Eleanor herself was meditating an escape to the same court, and had put on man's apparel for that purpose, when she was seized by the king's order, and put into confinement. Thus Henry saw all his long perspective of future happiness totally clouded; his sons, scarce yet arrived at manhood, eager to share the spoils of their father's possessions; his queen warmly encouraging those undutiful princes in their rebellion; and many potentates of Europe not ashamed to afford assistance for the support of their pretensions. Nor were his prospects much more pleasing when he looked among his subjects: his licentious barons, disgusted with a vigilant administration, desired to be governed by princes whom they could flatter or intimidate: the clergy had not yet forgotten Becket's death; and the people considered him as a saint and a martyr. In this general disaffection Henry supported that intrepidity which he had shown through life, and prepared for a contest

from which he could expect to reap neither profit nor glory. Twenty thousand mercenary soldiers, joined to some troops which he brought over from Ireland, and a few barons of approved fidelity, formed the sole force with which he proposed to resist his opponents.

It was not long before the young princes had sufficient influence upon the continent to raise a powerful confederacy in their favour. Beside the king of France, Philip count of Flanders, Matthew count of Boulogne, Theobald count of Blois, and Henry count of Eu, declared themselves in their interests. William, king of Scotland, also made one of this association; and a plan was concerted for a general invasion of Henry's extensive dominions. This was shortly after put into execution. The king's continental dominions were invaded on one side by the counts of Flanders and Boulogne; on the other by the king of France with a large army, which the young English princes animated by their presence and popularity.

[1173.] But Henry found means to oppose them in every quarter; the count of Boulogne, being mortally wounded in the assault of the town of Driencourt, his death stopped the progress of the Flemish arms on that side. The French being obliged to retire from the siege of Verneuil, Henry attacked their rear, put them to the rout, and took many prisoners. The barons of Bretagne also, who had risen in favour of the young princes, shared no better fate: their troops being defeated in the field, and taking shelter in the town of Dol, were made prisoners of war. These

successes repressed the pride and the expectations of the confederate forces; and a conference was demanded by the French king, to which Henry readily agreed. In this interview he had the mortification to see his three sons ranged on the side of his mortal and inveterate enemy; but he was still more disappointed to find that their demands rose with their incapacity to obtain them by compulsion.

While Henry was thus quelling the insolence of his foreign enemies, his English subjects were in no small danger of revolting from their obedience at home. The nobility were in general united to oppose him; and an irruption at this time by the king of Scotland, assisted their schemes of insurrection. The earl of Leicester, at the head of a body of Flemings, invaded Suffolk, but was repulsed with great slaughter. The earl of Ferrars, Roger de Mowbray, and many others of equal dignity, rose in arms; while the more to augment the confusion, the king of Scotland broke into the Northern provinces with an army of eighty thousand men, which laid the whole country into one extensive scene of desolation. Henry, from baffling his enemies in France, flew over to oppose those [1174.]
in England; but his long dissension with Becket still was remembered against him, and it was his interest to persuade the clergy as well as the people, that he was no way accessary to his murder. All the world now began to think the dead prelate a saint; and, if we consider the ignorance of the times, perhaps Henry himself thought so too. He had some time before taken proper

precautions to exculpate himself to the pope, and given him the most solemn promises to perform whatever penances the church should inflict. He had engaged at the Christmas following to take the cross; and, if the pope insisted on it, to serve three years against the infidels, either in Spain or Palestine; and promised not to stop appeals to the holy see. These concessions seemed to satisfy the court of Rome for that time; but they were nevertheless, every day, putting Henry in mind of his promise, and demanding those humiliations, for his offences to the saint, that could alone reconcile him to the church. He now therefore found it the most proper conjuncture to obey; and, knowing the influence of superstition over the minds of the people, and perhaps apprehensive that a part of his troubles arose from the displeasure of Heaven, he resolved to do penance at the shrine of St. Thomas of Canterbury, for that was the name given to Becket upon his canonization. As soon as he came within sight of the church of Canterbury, alighting from his horse, he walked barefoot towards the town, prostrated himself before the shrine of the saint, remained in fasting and prayer a whole day, watched all night the holy relics, made a grant of fifty pounds a year to the convent for a constant supply of tapers to illuminate the shrine; and not satisfied with these submissions, he assembled a chapter of monks, disrobed himself before them, put a scourge of discipline into each of their hands, and presented his bare shoulders to their infliction. Next day he received absolution; and departing for London, received the agreeable

news of a victory over the Scots, obtained on the very day of his absolution.

Having thus made his peace with the church, and brought over the minds of the people, he fought upon surer grounds; every victory he obtained was imputed to the favour of the reconciled saint, and every success thus tended to ascertain the growing confidence of his party. The victory which was gained over the Scots was signal and decisive. William, their king, after having committed the most horrible depredations upon the northern frontiers, had thought proper to retreat, upon the advance of an English army, commanded by Ralph de Glanville, the famous English lawyer. As he had fixed his station at Alnwick, he thought himself perfectly secure, from the remoteness of the enemy, against any attack. In this, however, he was deceived; for Glanville, informed of his situation, made a hasty and fatiguing march to the place of his encampment, and approached it very nearly during the obscurity of a mist. The Scots, who continued in perfect security, were surprised in the morning to find themselves attacked by the enemy, which they thought at such a distance; and their king, venturing with a small body of a hundred horse to oppose the assailants, was quickly surrounded, and taken prisoner. His troops, hearing of his disaster, fled on all sides with the utmost precipitation, and made the best of their way to their own country.

From that time Henry's affairs began to wear a better aspect; the barons, who had revolted, or were preparing for a revolt, made instant submission;

they delivered up their castles to the victor, and England, in a few weeks, was restored to perfect tranquillity. Young Henry, who was ready to embark with a large army, to second the efforts of the English insurgents, finding all disturbances quieted at home, abandoned all thoughts of the expedition. Lewis attempted in vain to besiege Rouen, which Henry hastened over to succour. A cessation of arms, and a conference, were once more agreed upon by the two monarchs. Henry granted his sons much less advantageous terms than they formerly refused to accept; the most material were some pensions for their support, some castles for their residence, and an indemnity to all their adherents. Thus England once more emerged from the numerous calamities that threatened to overwhelm it, and the king was left at free liberty to make various provisions for the glory, the happiness, and the security of his people.

His first care was to make his prisoner, the king of Scotland, undergo a proper punishment for his unmerited and ungenerous attack. That prince was obliged to sign a treaty, by which he was compelled to do homage to Henry for his dominions in Scotland. It was agreed, that his barons and bishops also should do the same; and that the fortresses of Edinburgh, Stirling, Berwick, Roxburgh, and Jedburgh, should be delivered into the hands of the conqueror till the articles were performed. This treaty was punctually and rigorously executed: the king, barons, and prelates of Scotland, did homage to Henry in the cathedral of York: so that he might now be considered as monarch of

the whole island, the mountainous parts of Wales only excepted.

His domestic regulations were as wise as his political conduct was splendid. He enacted severe penalties against robbery, murder, false coining, and burning of houses; ordaining that these crimes should be punished by the amputation of the right hand and right foot. The ordeal trial by the water, though it still subsisted, was yet so far weakened, that if a person, who came off in this scrutiny, should be afterwards legally convicted by credible testimony, he was condemned to banishment. He partitioned out the kingdom into four divisions; and appointed itinerant justices to go their respective circuits to try causes, to restrain the cruelties of their barons, and to protect the lower ranks of the people in security. He renewed the trial by jury, which, by the barbarous method of camp-fight, was almost grown obsolete. He demolished all the new-erected castles that had been built in the times of anarchy and general confusion; and, to secure the kingdom more effectually against invasion, he established a well-armed militia, which with proper accoutrements, specified in the act, were to defend the realm upon any emergency.

But it was not in the power of wisdom to conciliate the turbulent and ambitious spirits of his sons, who, not contented with rebellion against their father, now warmly prosecuted their enmities against each other. Richard, whom Henry had made master of Guienne, and who had [1183.] already displayed great marks of valour in hum-

bling his mutinous barons, refused to obey his father's orders in doing homage to his elder brother for that duchy. Young Henry and Geoffrey, uniting their arms, carried war into their brother's dominions; and while the king was endeavouring to compose their differences, he found himself secretly conspired against by all. What the result of this conspiracy might be, is uncertain; for it was defeated by the death of young Henry, who died in the twenty-eighth year of his age, of a fever, at Martel, not without the deepest remorse for his undutiful conduct towards his father.

As this prince left no posterity, Richard was become heir in his room; and he soon discovered the same ardent ambition that had misled his elder brother. He refused to obey his father's commands in giving up Guienne, of which he had been put in possession; and even made preparations to attack his brother Geoffrey, who was possessed of Bretagne. No sooner was this breach made up, at the intercession of the queen, than Geoffrey broke out into violence, and demanded Anjou to be annexed to his dominions of Bretagne. This being refused him, he followed the old undutiful method of procuring redress, fled to the court of France, and prepared to levy an army against his father.

[1186.] Henry was freed from the danger that threatened him on that quarter, by the death of his son, who was killed in a tournament at Paris. The loss of this prince gave few, except the king himself, any uneasiness, as he was universally hated, and went among the people under the opprobrious name of *the child of Perdition.*

But the death of the prince did not wholly remove the cause of his revolt; for Philip Augustus, king of France, disputed his title to the wardship of Arthur, the son of Geoffrey, who was now become duke of Bretagne, upon the death of his father. Some other causes of dissension inflamed the dispute between the two monarchs. Philip had once more debauched Richard from his duty; insisted upon his marriage being completed with Adelais, the sister of Philip; and threatened to enforce his pretensions by a formidable invasion. In consequence of this claim, another conference was held between Gisors and Trie, [1188.] the usual place of meeting, under a vast elm, that is said to have shaded more than an acre. It was in the midst of this conference upon their mutual rights, that a new object of interest was offered to their deliberation, and that quickly bore down all secular considerations before it. The archbishop of Tyre appeared before the assembly in the most miserable habit, and with looks calculated to inspire compassion. He had come from the Holy Land, and had seen the oppressions of the Christians, who were appointed to defend the Holy Sepulchre, and was a witness of the triumph of the infidels. He painted the distresses of those champions of the cross in the most pathetic manner; he deplored their bravery and their misfortunes. The Christians, about a century before, had attacked and taken Jerusalem; but the Saracens recovered courage after the first torrent of success was past, and being every day reinforced by fresh supplies, at last conquered by perseverance a land of warriors,

who, in common, preferring celibacy to marriage, had not multiplied in the ordinary methods of population. The holy city itself was soon retaken by the victorious arms of Saladin; and all Palestine, except a few maritime towns, was subdued. Nothing now remained of those boasted conquests that had raised the glory, and inflamed the zeal, of the western world; and nothing was to be seen, of what near a century before had employed the efforts of all the noblest spirits of Europe to acquire. The western Christians were astonished at receiving this dismal intelligence; the whole audience burst into tears; the two kings laid aside their animosity, and agreed to convert their whole attention to the rescue of Jerusalem from the hands of the infidels. They instantly took the cross; many of their most considerable vassals imitated their example; and as the emperor Frederic I. entered into the same confederacy, it was universally expected that nothing could resist their united endeavours. But it was the fate of Henry to be crossed in his most darling pursuits by his undutiful and ungrateful children.

Richard, who had long wished to have all the glory of such an expedition to himself, and who could not bear to have even his father a partner in his victories, entered into a confederacy with the king of France, who promised to confirm him in those wishes at which he so ardently aspired. He therefore began by making an inroad into the territories of the count of Thoulouse, a vassal of the king of France; and this monarch, in order to retaliate, carried war into the provinces of Berri

and Auvergne. Henry, who was apprised of their secret confederacy, nevertheless attempted to make depredations in turn upon the dominions of the French king. Conferences were proposed, attended, and dismissed. At length, Henry found himself obliged to give up all hopes of taking the cross, and compelled to enter upon a war with France and his eldest son, who were unnaturally leagued against him. He now saw the confederacy daily gaining ground. Ferté-Bernard fell first into the hands of the enemy; Mans was [1189.] next taken by assault; Amboise, Chaumont, and Château de Loire, opened their gates upon the enemy's appearance; Tours was invested; and the king, who had retired to Saumur, and had daily instances of the cowardice and infidelity of his governors, expected the most dismal issue of all his enterprises. While he was in this state of despondency, the duke of Burgundy, the count of Flanders, and archbishop of Rheims, interposed their good offices; and at last a treaty was concluded, in which he submitted to many mortifying concessions. It was agreed that Richard should marry the princess Adelais, and be crowned king of England during the lifetime of his father. It was stipulated, that Henry should pay twenty thousand marks to the king of France, as a compensation for the charges of the war; that his own barons should engage to make him observe this treaty; and in case of violating it, to join Philip and Richard against him; and that all his vassals who espoused the cause of Richard should receive an indemnity for the offence. These

were terms sufficiently humiliating to a prince accustomed to give, not receive, commands: but what was his resentment, when, upon demanding a list of the barons that were to be thus pardoned, he found his son John, his favourite child, among the number! He had long borne an infirm state of body with calm resignation; he had seen his children rebel without much emotion; he saw his own son his conqueror, himself bereft of his power, reduced to the condition of a fugitive, and almost suppliant in his old age; and all this he endured with tranquillity of temper; but when he saw that child, whose interests always lay next his heart, among the number of those who were in rebellion against him, he could no longer contain his indignation. He broke out into expressions of the utmost despair; cursed the day in which he had received his miserable being; and bestowed on his ungrateful children a malediction which he never after could be prevailed upon to retract. The more his heart was disposed to friendship and affection, the more he resented this barbarous return; and now, not having one corner in his heart where he could look for comfort, or fly for refuge from his conflicting passions, he lost all his former vivacity. A lingering fever, caused by a broken heart, soon after terminated his life and his miseries. He died at the castle of Chinon, near Saumur.

His corpse was conveyed by his natural son Geoffrey, who of all his children behaved with duty, to the nunnery of Fontevrault; and next day, while it lay in the abbey church, Richard, chancing

to enter, was struck with horror at the sight. At his approach the blood was seen to gush out at the mouth and nostrils of the corpse; and this, which, without doubt, was accidental, was interpreted by the superstition of the times as the most dreadful rebuke: Richard could not endure the sight; he exclaimed, "that he was his father's murderer;" and expressed a strong, though late, sense of that undutiful conduct which brought his parent to an untimely grave. Thus died Henry in the fifty-seventh year of his age, and the thirty-fifth of his reign; in the course of which he displayed all the abilities of a politician, all the sagacity of a legislator, and all the magnanimity of a hero. He was of a middle stature, strong and well proportioned; his countenance was lively and engaging; his conversation affable and entertaining; his elocution easy, persuasive, and ever at command. When he could enjoy leisure, he recreated himself either in learned conversation or reading, and he cultivated his natural talents by study above any prince of his time. During his reign all foreign improvements in literature and politeness, in laws and arts, seem to have been, in a good measure, transplanted into England. The little learning of the Saxon priests, which was confined to church history and legendary tales, was now exchanged for the subtilties of school philosophy. The homely manners of the great were softened by the pomp of chivalry. The people, however, were as yet far from being civilised; and even in their cities, where the social arts were best cultivated, there were amazing in-

stances of barbarity. It was common, for instance, in London, for great numbers, to the amount of a hundred, or more, of the sons and relatives of eminent citizens, to form themselves into a confederacy, to plunder and rob their more wealthy neighbours. By these crimes it was become so dangerous to walk the streets at night, that the citizens, after dark, were obliged to continue within doors. A band of these ruffians had one day attacked the house of a rich citizen, with an intention to plunder it. They had already broken through a stone wall with hammers and wedges, and were actually entering the house sword in hand, when the citizen, in complete armour, supported by his servant, appeared in the passage to oppose them. He cut off the right hand of the first robber that entered; and made such a noble resistance, that his neighbours had time to assemble and come to his relief. The man who lost his hand was caught; and was tempted, by the promise of a pardon, to reveal his confederates, among whom was one John Senex, esteemed among the richest and the best-born citizens of London. He was convicted by the ordeal trial; and though he offered five hundred marks for his life, the king refused the money, and ordered him to be hanged.

Henry left only two legitimate sons, Richard, who succeeded him, and John, who inherited no territory, and therefore received the surname of Lackland. He left three legitimate daughters, Maud, who was married to the duke of Saxony, Eleanor, married to Alphonso king of Castile, and

Joan, to William king of Sicily. He left two natural sons by Rosamond; Richard Longsword, who married the daughter and heiress of the earl of Salisbury; and Geoffrey, who was afterwards archbishop of York.

CHAPTER X.

RICHARD I. *surnamed* Cœur de Lion.

Richard, who succeeded to the throne without opposition, seemed resolved to discourage future disobedience, by dismissing from his service all those who had assisted him in his former undutiful conduct. Those who had seconded his rebellion, instead of meeting with that trust and honour which they expected, were treated with scorn and neglect. He retained in his service all the loyal adherents of the late king; and more than once observed, that those who were faithful to one sovereign would probably continue so to another. He instantly, upon his accession, released his mother from confinement; and was profuse in heaping favours upon his brother John, who afterwards made a very indifferent return for his indulgence.

But the king was no way suspicious in his temper; nor did he give much attention to his own security, being more earnestly solicitous of fame. A romantic desire for strange adventures, and an immoderate zeal for the external rites of Christianity, were the ruling passions of the times. By these alone glory was to be acquired; and by these Richard only hoped for glory. The Jews, who had been for some time increasing in the kingdom, were the first who fell a sacrifice to the enthusiastic zeal of the people; and great numbers of them

were slaughtered by the citizens of London, upon the very day of the king's coronation. Five hundred of that infatuated people had retired into York Castle for safety; but finding themselves unable to defend the place, they resolved to perish by killing one another, rather than meet the fury of their persecutors. Having taken this gloomy resolution, they first murdered their wives and children; next threw the dead bodies over the wall against their enemies, who attempted to scale it; and then setting fire to the houses, perished in the flames.

This horrid massacre, which was in itself so impolitic and unjust, instead of tarnishing the lustre of this monarch's reign, was then considered as a most splendid commencement of his government; and the people were from thence led to form the most favourable sentiments of his future glory. Nor was it long before he showed himself perfectly fitted to gratify their most romantic desires. Perhaps impelled more by a love of military glory than actuated by superstition, he resolved upon an expedition to the Holy Land, and took every method to raise money for so expensive an undertaking. His father had left him a treasure of above a hundred thousand marks; and this sum he endeavoured to augment by all expedients, however pernicious to the public, or dangerous to royal authority. He set up to sale the revenues and manors of the crown, and several offices of the greatest trust and power. Liberties, charters, castles, and employments, were given to the best bidders. When some of his friends suggested the danger

attending this venality, he told them he would sell the city of London itself if he could procure a purchaser. In these times we find but one man who was honest enough to retire from employment when places were become thus ignominious. This was the great lawyer Glanville, who resigned his post of justiciary, and took the cross. Richard was not much displeased at his resignation, as he was able shortly after to sell his employment to Hugh, bishop of Durham, who gave a thousand marks for the office. Thus the king, elated with the hopes of fame, was blind to every other consideration. Numerous exactions were practised upon people of all ranks and stations; menaces, expostulations, promises, were used to frighten the timid, or allure the avaricious. A zealous preacher was so far emboldened as to remonstrate against the king's conduct; and advised him to part with his three daughters, which were Pride, Avarice, and Sensuality. To this Richard readily replied, "You counsel right, my friend; and I have already provided husbands for them all. I will dispose of my Pride to the Templars; my Avarice to the Monks; and as for my Sensuality, the Clergy shall share that among them." At length, having procured a sufficient supply for his undertaking, and sold his superiority over the kingdom of Scotland, which had been acquired in the last reign, for a moderate sum, he set out for the Holy Land, whither he was impelled by repeated messages from the king of France, who was ready to embark in the same enterprise.

The first place of rendezvous, for the troops of

England and France, was the plain of Vezelay, on the borders of Burgundy, where, when Richard and Philip arrived, they found their armies amounting to a hundred thousand fighting men. These were all ardent in the cause; the flower of all the military in both dominions, and provided with all the implements and accoutrements of war. Here the French prince and the English entered into the most solemn engagements of mutual support; and having determined to conduct their armies to the Holy Land by sea, they parted, one for Genoa, the other for Marseilles, with a view of meeting the fleets that were to attend them at their respective stations. It was not long after that both fleets put to sea; and nearly about the same time were obliged, by stress of weather, to take shelter in Messina, the capital of Sicily, where they were detained during the whole winter. Richard took up his quarters in the suburbs, and possessed himself of a small fort, which commanded the harbour. Philip quartered his troops in the town, and lived upon good terms with the Sicilian king. [1190.]

It is now unknown what gave rise to a quarrel, which happened soon after, between the Sicilians and the English; it is doubtful whether the intrigues of the French king, or the violent proceedings of Richard. Certain it is, that the Messinese soon took occasion to treat the English with great insolence; shut their gates, manned their walls, and set Richard at defiance. Richard, who had hitherto acted as a friend, endeavoured to use the mediation of Philip to compromise this quarrel;

but while the two monarchs were yet in deliberation, a body of Sicilians issued from the town, and attacked the English with great impetuosity. This insult was sufficient to excite the fury of Richard, who, naturally bold, and conscious of his own superior force, assaulted the city with such fury, that it was soon taken, and the standard of England displayed on the ramparts. Philip, who considered the place as his quarters, exclaimed against the insult, and ordered some of his troops to pull down that mark of his disgrace. To this, however, Richard returned for answer, that he was willing to take down the standard, since it displeased his associate; but that no power on earth should compel him to do so. This was sufficient to produce a mutual jealousy between these two princes, which never after subsided; but which was still more inflamed by the opposition of their tempers.

Many were the mistrusts and the reconciliations between these monarchs, which were very probably inflamed by the Sicilian king's endea-
[1191.] vours. At length, however, having settled all controversies, they set sail for the Holy Land, where the French arrived long before the English. The little knowledge that was then had of the art of sailing, made that passage by sea very long and dangerous, which is now considered as so trifling. Richard's fleet was once more encountered by a tempest, and two of the ships were driven upon the coast of the island of Cyprus. Isaac, who was then prince of that country, either impelled by avarice, or willing to discourage the rest of Richard's fleet from landing, pillaged the ships that

were stranded, and threw the seamen and soldiers into prison. But Richard, who soon after arrived, took ample vengeance for that injury. He disembarked his troops, defeated the tyrant, entered the capital by storm, obliged Isaac to surrender at discretion, and took the island into his own possession. It was there that Richard married Berengaria, daughter to the king of Navarre, who had attended him in his expedition; and whom he had preferred to Adelais, Philip's sister, whose charms were not so powerful, or whose fidelity was more suspected.

Upon the arrival of the English army in Palestine, fortune was seen to declare more openly in favour of the common cause. The French and English princes seemed to forget their secret jealousies, and act in concert. In besieging the city of Acre, while the one made the attack the other guarded the trenches; and this duty they performed each day alternately. By this conduct, that garrison, after a long and obstinate resistance, was obliged to capitulate; and upon condition of having their lives spared, they promised to restore the Christian prisoners, and to deliver up the wood of the true cross. Such were the *amazing* advantages of an enterprise that had laid Asia in blood, and had, in a great measure, depopulated Europe of its bravest forces!

Immediately after the conquest of this place, Philip, either disgusted at the ascendant assumed by Richard, or displeased at his superior popularity, declared his resolution of returning to France. He pleaded the bad state of his health in excuse

for his desertion; and, to give a colour to his friendly professions, he left Richard ten thousand of his troops, under the command of the duke of Burgundy. Richard, being now left sole conductor of the war, went on from victory to victory. The Christian adventurers, under his command, determined to besiege the renowned city of Ascalon, in order to prepare the way for attacking Jerusalem with greater advantage. Saladin, the most renowned of all the Saracen monarchs, resolved to dispute their march, and placed himself upon the road with an army of two hundred thousand men. This was a day equal to Richard's wishes; this an enemy worthy his highest ambition. The English were victorious. Richard, when the wings of his army were defeated, led on the main body in person, and restored the battle. The Saracens fled in the utmost confusion; and no less than thirty thousand of their number perished in the field of battle. Ascalon soon surrendered after this victory; other cities of less note followed the example; and Richard was at last able to advance within [1192.] sight of Jerusalem, the object of his long and ardent expectations. But, just at this glorious juncture, his ambition was to suffer a total overthrow: upon reviewing his forces, and considering his abilities to prosecute the siege, he found that his army was so wasted with famine, fatigue, and even with victory, that they were neither able nor willing to second the views of their commander. It appeared, therefore, absolutely necessary to come to an accommodation with Saladin; and a truce for three years was accordingly concluded, in

which it was agreed, that the sea-port towns of Palestine should remain in the hands of the Christians; and that all of that religion should be permitted to make their pilgrimage to Jerusalem in perfect security.

Richard, having thus concluded his expedition, with more glory than advantage, began to think of returning home, and of enjoying in tranquillity those honours which he had reaped with so much danger. But he was at a loss how to proceed. If he should take shipping, and return by the way he came, he must necessarily put himself into the power of the king of France, from whose resentment he had every thing to fear. No way was left but by going more to the North. He, therefore, sailed up the Adriatic; and, being wrecked near Aquileia, assumed the disguise of a pilgrim, with the hope of making his way, in that private manner, through Germany. Unfortunately his intentions and person were not so concealed, but that his quality was suspected; and the governor of Istria pursued him, in order to make him a prisoner. Being thus forced from the direct road, and now become a fugitive, he was obliged to pass by Vienna, where his expenses and liberalities betraying his dignity, though disguised in the habit of a pilgrim, he was arrested by Leopold, duke of Austria, who commanded him to be imprisoned and loaded with shackles, to the disgrace of honour and humanity. This prince had served under Richard at the siege of Acre; and being disgusted at some affront offered him by his commander on that occasion, he took this base method of retaliating the injury.

His avarice, also, might have had a share in this procedure, as he expected a large share of that ransom which he knew would be given by the English to extricate their king from bondage. Henry the Sixth, who was then emperor of Germany, was equally an enemy to Richard, on account of the alliance contracted between him and Tancred king of Sicily. When, therefore, he received the news of Richard's being in custody, he required the prisoner to be delivered up to him, and ordered a large sum of money to the duke as a reward for this service. Thus the king of England, who had long filled the world with his fame, was basely thrown into a dungeon, and loaded with irons, by those who expected to reap a sordid advantage from his misfortunes. It was a long time before his subjects in England knew what was become of their warlike monarch. So little intercourse was there between different nations at that time, that this discovery is said by some to have been made by a poor French minstrel, who, playing upon his harp, near the fortress in which Richard was confined, a tune which he knew that unhappy monarch was fond of, was answered from within by the king, who with his harp played the same tune; and this discovered the place of his confinement.

In the mean time, while Richard was thus fruitlessly victorious, and afterwards miserably confined, his affairs in England were in a very unprosperous situation. The kingdom was put under the government of two persons, one of whom had bought his place, and the other had risen to it by the meanest arts of adulation. The bishop of Durham

was ignorant and avaricious; his colleague, Longchamp, who was chancellor of the realm, was naturally proud, and still more elated by the consciousness of possessing his master's favour. Tempers so opposite soon begat enmity; and Longchamp went even so far as to arrest the person of his associate, who was obliged to resign his power to obtain his liberty. It was to no purpose that the king, by his letters, commanded Longchamp to replace his coadjutor; this haughty prelate refused to obey, alleging that he knew the king's secret intentions better than to comply. He proceeded, therefore, still to govern the kingdom alone; and as he knew his situation was precarious, he increased the number of his guard, without which he never ventured from his palace. In the universal disgust which so much power and magnificence naturally produced against him, there was no person in the kingdom hardy enough to control his will, except John, the king's brother, who, having been personally disobliged by this prelate, was willing to seize the present favourable occasion of universal discontent, to oppose himself to his power. He accordingly ventured to summon, at Reading, a general council of the nobility and prelates; and cited Longchamp to appear before them. The chancellor, sensible of his own insolence and their enmity, was unwilling to trust himself in their power, but shut himself up in the Tower of London. Thence he fled, in the disguise of a female habit, beyond sea; upon which the archbishop of Rouen was made justiciary in his room. These dissensions were soon known by the king of France,

who had by this time returned from the Holy Land. He made all possible use of Longchamp's resentment, to divide the English still more effectually; and almost prevailed upon John to throw off his allegiance, by an offer of putting him in possession of all Richard's continental dominions.

It was in this precarious situation of affairs that the English were first informed of the captivity of their beloved monarch, and the base treatment he had received, without even the colour of justice to gloss over the injury. The queen-dowager was particularly enraged at the treatment of her favourite son.

[1193.] She wrote reiterated letters to pope Celestine, to excite his compassion or his indignation, but all to very little purpose. The people testified their regard for him with all the marks of violence and despair. The clergy considered him as a sufferer in the cause of the church; and all mouths were filled with the nobleness of his actions and the greatness of his fall. But while these testified the sincerity of their sorrow, there were some that secretly rejoiced in his disaster, and did all they could to prolong the term of his captivity. In this number, besides the king of France, his ancient enemy, was his own brother John, who forgetting every tie of kindred, duty, or gratitude, on the first invitation from Philip, suddenly went abroad, and held a conference with him, in which the perpetual captivity of Richard was agreed upon. He stipulated to deliver into Philip's hand a great part of Normandy; and, in return, he received the French king's assurances of being secured on the English throne; and some say that he did homage for the

crown of England. In consequence of this treaty, Philip invaded Normandy, the fortresses of which were delivered up to him after a colour of opposition; and all but Rouen were subjected to his authority. John, on his side, was equally assiduous to secure England; and, upon his arrival in London, claimed the throne, as being heir to his brother, of whose death he pretended to have received certain intelligence. But in this the traitor's expectations were disappointed. His claim was rejected by all the barons, who took such measures to provide for the security of the kingdom, that John was obliged to return to the continent, and openly to acknowledge his alliance with the king of France.

In the mean time, the unhappy Richard suffered all the mortifications that malicious tyranny could inflict. The emperor, in order to render him more impatient for the recovery of his liberty, and make him submit to the payment of a larger ransom, treated him with the greatest severity, and reduced him to a condition worse than that of the meanest malefactor. Richard, however, was too noble-spirited to be meanly depressed by those indignities. As he did not know what extremities he might be reduced to, or what condescensions he might be obliged to make, he wrote to the justiciary of England to obey no orders that should come from him, if they seemed in the least contrary to his honour or the good of the nation. His precautions were well founded; for the emperor, willing to intimidate him, charged him at the diet of Worms with many crimes and misdemeanors, partly to justify his own cruelty, and partly to

swell the ransom. There he was accused of making an alliance with Tancred, the usurper of Sicily; of turning the arms of the crusade against a Christian prince; of affronting the duke of Austria before Acre; of obstructing the progress of the Christian arms, by his contests with the king of France; of concluding a truce with Saladin, and leaving Jerusalem in the hands of the infidels. These frivolous charges were heard by Richard with becoming indignation. He even waved his dignity to answer them; and so fully vindicated himself before the princes who composed the diet, that they exclaimed loudly against the conduct of the emperor, while the pope even threatened him with excommunication. This barbarous monarch now saw that he could no longer detain his prisoner. He therefore was willing to listen to terms of accommodation. A ransom was agreed upon, which amounted to a hundred and fifty thousand marks, or about three hundred thousand pounds of our money. Of this, Richard was to pay one hundred thousand before he received his liberty, and sixty-seven hostages were to be delivered for the remainder. The agreement being thus made, Richard sent Hubert, one of his faithful followers in the Holy Land, to England, with the terms upon which he was to receive his liberty, and with a commission to raise money for that purpose.

In the feudal times, every military tenant was, by law, obliged to give aid for the ransom of his lord from captivity. The tax arising from this obligation was accordingly raised throughout the

kingdom, and assessed by itinerant justices. But the ardour of the people outwent the cool offerings of their duty; great sums were raised by voluntary contribution to purchase the freedom of their king. The churches and monasteries melted down their plate; the bishops, abbots, and nobles, paid a fourth of their annual income; the inferior clergy contributed a tenth of their tithes, and the requisite sum was thus at length amassed; with which queen Eleanor, and the justiciary, immediately set out for Germany.

While the English were thus piously employed in preparing for the ransom of their king, Philip was as assiduously occupied in endeavouring to prolong Richard's captivity. As he had the passions of the emperor to work upon, whom he knew to be avaricious to the last degree, he made him fresh proposals still more lucrative than those which had been agreed upon for Richard's ransom. He offered to marry the emperor's daughter, and to gratify him with a sum equal to the ransom, if he would only detain his prisoner for one year more in captivity. The emperor perceived that he had concluded a treaty with Richard too hastily, and repented of his rashness. He was very willing to sacrifice every consideration of honour or justice; but then he feared the resentment of his princes, who, in the feudal times, had power to punish his injustice. Thus he continued fluctuating between his avarice and his fears, between different motives equally sordid, until the day fixed for the king's deliverance arrived His releasement from captivity was performed with great ceremony [1194.]

at Mentz, in presence of the German nobility: the money was paid by queen Eleanor, the hostages were delivered as a security for the remainder, and Richard was restored to freedom. In the mean time, the emperor beheld his releasement with an agitation of all the malignant passions. He could not bear to see one, whom he had made his enemy, in a state of felicity; he could not bear to lose the superior advantages that were offered for his detention. All his terrors, from his own subjects, gave way to the dictates of avarice; he resolved to send him back to his former prison, and gave orders to have him pursued and arrested. But luckily the messengers were too late. Richard, well acquainted with his perfidy, and secretly apprised of the offers of the French king, had ordered some shipping to attend him at the mouth of the Scheld; so that, upon his arrival at the place of embarkation, he went instantly on board, although the wind was against him, and was out of sight of land when his pursuers reached Antwerp.

Nothing could exceed the joy of the English upon seeing their monarch return, after all his achievements and sufferings. He made his entry into London in triumph; and such was the profusion of wealth shown by the citizens, that the German lords who attended him were heard to say, that if the emperor had known of their affluence, he would not so easily have parted with their king. He, soon after, ordered himself to be crowned anew at Winchester. He convoked a general council at Nottingham, at which he confiscated all his traitorous brother's possessions; and then hav-

ing made proper preparations for avenging himself on the king of France, he set sail with a strong body of forces for Normandy.

Richard was but one day landed, when his faithless brother John came to make submission, and to throw himself at his monarch's feet. It was not without some degree of resentment that Richard received a prince, who had all along been leagued with his mortal enemy against him. However, at the intercession of queen Eleanor, he was received into favour. "I forgive him," said the king; "and I wish I could as easily forget his offences as he will forget my pardon." This condescension was not lost upon a man whose heart, though naturally bad, was not yet dead to every sentiment of humanity. From that time he served him faithfully; and did him signal services in his battles with the king of France, which followed soon after. This war, from which no permanent consequences resulted, only served to keep the animosity of the two nations alive, without fixing their claims or pretensions. The most remarkable circumstance in the tedious journals of those transactions, is the taking the bishop of Beauvais captive at the head of his vassals, and his being put in prison by Richard. When the pope demanded his liberty, and claimed him as a child of the church, the king sent his holiness the bloody coat of mail which that prelate had worn in battle; asking, whether that was the coat of his son? The cruelty of both parties was in this manner inflamed by insult and revenge. Both kings frequently put out the eyes of their prisoners; and treaties were concluded and

broken with very little repugnance. At length the [1196.] pope's legate induced them to conclude a treaty, which promised to be attended with a firm reconciliation. The war, however, was renewed; but the death of Richard put an end to the contest.

[1199.] Vidomar, viscount of Limoges, a vassal of the crown, had taken possession of a treasure which was found by one of his peasants in digging a field; and to secure the remainder, he sent a part of it to the king. Richard, as superior lord, sensible that he had a right to the whole, insisted on its being sent him; and, upon refusal, attacked the castle of Chalus, where he understood this treasure had been deposited. On the fourth day of the siege, as he was riding round the place to observe where the assault might be given with the fairest success, he was aimed at by one Bertram de Gourdon, an archer, from the castle, and pierced in the shoulder with an arrow. The wound was not in itself dangerous; but an unskilful surgeon endeavouring to disengage the arrow from the flesh, so rankled the wound that it mortified and brought on fatal symptoms. Richard, when he found his end approaching, made a will, in which he bequeathed the kingdom, with all his treasure, to his brother John, except a fourth part, which he distributed among his servants. He ordered also that the archer who had shot him should be brought into his presence, and demanded "what injury he had done him that he should take away his life." The prisoner answered with deliberate intrepidity: "You killed

with your own hands my father, and my two brothers; and you intended to have hanged me. I am now in your power, and my torments may give you revenge; but I will endure them with pleasure, since it is my consolation that I have rid the world of a tyrant." Richard, struck with this answer, ordered the soldier to be presented with one hundred shillings, and set at liberty; but Marcadé, the general who commanded under him, like a true ruffian, ordered him to be flayed alive, and then hanged. Richard died in the tenth year of his reign, and the forty-second of his age, leaving only one natural son, called Philip.

Richard had all the qualities that could gain the admiration and love of a barbarous age, and few of those that could ensure the approbation of his more refined posterity. He was open, magnanimous, generous, and brave, to a degree of romantic excess. But then he was cruel, proud, and resentful. He valued neither the blood nor the treasure of his subjects; and he enfeebled his states by useless expeditions, and by wars calculated rather to promote his own revenge than their interest. During this reign, the inferior orders of the people seemed to increase in power, and to show a degree of independent obstinacy. Formerly, they were led on to acts of treason by their barons; they were now found to aim at vindicating their rights under a leader of their own rank and denomination. The populace of London placed at their head one William Fitz-Osbert, commonly called Longbeard, who had been bred to the law; but who, more fond of popularity than business, renounced his profession,

and espoused the cause of the poor with uncommon enthusiasm. He styled himself the saviour of the poor; and, upon a certain occasion, even went over to Normandy, where he represented to the king that the poor citizens were oppressed by an unequal assessment of taxes, and obtained a mitigation. His fame for this became so great among the lower orders of his fellow-citizens, that above fifty thousand of them entered into an engagement to defend and to obey him. Murders were in consequence daily committed in the streets; but whether by Longbeard's order, is uncertain. The justiciary (for the king was then absent) summoned him before the council to answer for his conduct: but he came with such a formidable train, that none were found hardy enough to accuse him. However, he was pursued some time after by a detachment of officers of justice; but killing one of them, he escaped with his concubine to the church of St. Mary Le Bow, where he defended himself with determined resolution. There he was supplied with arms and provisions, and expected to be joined by the populace; but being deceived in his expectations, he was at last forced from his retreat by the smoke of wet straw kindled for the purpose at the door. He was then taken, tried, and convicted; and being drawn at a horse's tail through the streets of London, he was hung in chains, with eight of his accomplices. The lower class of people, when he was dead, began to revere a man that they had not spirit to relieve. They stole his gibbet, and paid to it a veneration like that offered to the wood of the cross. The turf on which it

stood was carried away, and kept as a preservative from sickness and misfortune; and had not the clergy withstood the torrent of popular superstition, his memory might have probably received honours similar to those paid at the shrine of St. Thomas of Canterbury.

CHAPTER XI.

JOHN.

WERE the claims of princes settled on the same principles that govern the lower orders of mankind, John had nothing to fear from a disputed succession. The king of France, who was the only monarch that could assist the pretensions of a rival, had long declared for John's title; and, during the life of his brother, had given him the most convincing proofs of sincerity in his assistance. But it was otherwise now that Richard was no more. Philip began to show that his former alliances and friendships were calculated not to serve John, but to distress England; not to distribute justice, but to increase his own power. There was an old claimant of the crown, whom indeed Richard, upon his taking the cross, declared heir to the throne; but who was afterwards set aside, at the instance of the dowager-queen. This was Arthur, the son of his late brother Geoffrey, a youth who, though then but twelve years of age, promised to be deserving of the kingdom. Philip, who only desired an occasion to embarrass John, soon resolved to second this young claimant's pretensions; and several of the continental barons immediately declared in favour of Arthur's succession.

John, who was readily put in possession of the English throne, lost no time to second his interest on the continent; and his first care was to recover

the revolted provinces from young Arthur, his nephew. The war, therefore, between the English and French king was renewed with all its former animosity, and all its usual detail of petty victories and indecisive engagements. At length a treaty put an end to those conquests that [1200.] only served to thin mankind; and it was hastened by a circumstance peculiarly favourable. John's nephew Arthur, together with Constantia, his mother, distrusting the designs of the king of France, who only intended to betray them, came to throw themselves on his mercy, and restored the provinces which still continued in their interest. Thus this monarch, after a short contest, saw himself undisputed master of all the dominions which were annexed to the English throne. But he was ill able to preserve that power by his prudence, which was thus easily obtained by the mutual jealousies of his enemies. His first transgression was his marriage with Isabella, daughter of the count of Angouleme, while the queen was yet alive; and, what still increased the offence, while Isabella probably belonged to another husband, the [1201.] count de la Marche, who ardently loved her. This produced an insurrection against him; to repress which he was obliged to have recourse to his English subjects for assistance, by whose means the confederacy was soon broken; and John found, by his present success, that he might in future commit violences with impunity.

As the method of deciding all disputes by duel was still in full force, John resolved to avail himself of this advantage against all his refractory ba-

rons. He kept a set of hired bravoes, under the title of his champions; and these he deputed to fight his cause whenever any of the nobility opposed his encroachments. Such contemptible opponents very justly gave the haughty barons disgust; and an universal discontent prevailed among them, which at last produced another dangerous confederacy. John attempted to break it by oaths, protestations, and perfidies; but every attempt of this kind only served to connect his enemies, and render his person contemptible.

Something still remained to render John hateful to his subjects; and this ill-disposed prince took the first opportunity of becoming so. Young Arthur and his mother, who had so imprudently resigned themselves to his protection, soon perceived their error, and found that nothing honourable was to be expected from a prince of his abandoned character. Observing somewhat very suspicious in his manner of conducting himself to them, they fled from Mans, where he had detained them, and retired in the night to Angers, whence they went once more to take refuge with their old protector. As it was Philip's interest to treat them with all possible indulgence, they were received with great
[1202.] marks of distinction; and young Arthur's interests were soon after very vigorously supported. One town after another submitted to his authority; and all his attempts seemed to be attended with success. But his unfortunate ardour soon put an end to his hopes and his claims. Being of an enterprising disposition, and fond of military glory, he had laid siege to a fortress in which

Eleanor, the dowager-queen, was protected, and defended by a weak garrison. John, therefore, falling upon his little army before they were aware of his approach, the young prince was taken prisoner, together with the most considerable of the revolted barons. The greater part of the prisoners were sent over to England; but the unfortunate prince himself was shut up in the castle of Falaise. John, thus finding a rival at his mercy, from whom he had every thing to dread, began to meditate upon measures which would most effectually remove his future apprehensions. No other expedient suggested itself but what is foremost in the imagination of tyrants, namely, the young prince's death. How this brave youth was dispatched, is not well known: certain it is, that from the moment of his confinement he was never heard of more. The most probable account of this horrid transaction is as follows. The king having first proposed to one of his servants, William de la Braye, to dispatch [1203.] Arthur, the brave domestic replied, that he was a gentleman, and not an executioner. This officer having positively refused to comply, John had recourse to another instrument, who went, with proper directions, to the castle where Arthur was confined, to destroy him. But still this prince's fate seemed suspended: for Hubert de Bourg, chamberlain to the king, and constable of the place, willing to save him, undertook the cruel office himself, and sent back the assassin to his employer. However, he was soon obliged to confess the imposture; for Arthur's subjects vowing

the severest revenge, Hubert, to appease them, revealed the secret of his pretended death, and assured them that their prince was still alive, and in his custody. John, finding that his emissaries had more compunction than himself, resolved, with his own hands, to execute the bloody deed; and for that purpose he commanded that Arthur should be removed to the castle of Rouen, situated upon the river Seine. It was at midnight when John came in a boat to the place, and ordered the young prince to be brought before him. Long confinement, solitude, and the continuance of bad fortune, had now broken this generous youth's spirit; and perceiving that his death was meditated, he threw himself in the most imploring manner upon his knees before his uncle, and begged for mercy. John was too much hardened in the school of tyranny, to feel any pity for his wretched suppliant. His youth, his affinity, his merits, were all disregarded, or were even obnoxious in a rival. The barbarous tyrant, making no reply, stabbed him with his own hands; and, fastening a stone to the dead body, threw it into the Seine. This inhuman action rid John of a hated rival; but, happily for the instruction of future princes, it opened the way to his future ruin. Having in this manner shown himself the enemy of mankind in the prosperity of his reign, the whole world seemed to turn their back upon him in his distress.

John was now detested by all mankind; and during the rest of his reign he only supported himself in power, by making it the interest of some to

protect him, and letting others feel the effects of his resentment, if they offered to defend themselves. The loss of all his French provinces quickly followed his last transgression. Not but that he attempted a defence; and even laid siege to Alençon, one of the towns that had revolted from him. But Philip, his active rival, persuaded a body of knights, who were assembled at a tournament, to take his part; and these readily joining against the parricide, quickly obliged him to raise the siege. John, therefore, repulsed and stripped of his dominions, was obliged to bear the insult with patience; though, indeed, such was the ridiculous absurdity of his pride, that he assured those about him of his being able to take back in a day, what cost the French years in acquiring.

Normandy did not long resist the arms of Philip. Chateau-Gaillard, one of its [1204.] strongest fortresses, being taken after an obstinate siege, the whole duchy lay open to the invader; and while John basely sought safety by flying into England, Philip, secure of his prey, pushed his conquests with vigour. The whole duchy submitted to his authority; and thus, after being for near three centuries dismembered from the French monarchy, was again united to it.

John, being thus deprived of all his continental dominions, resolved to wreak his vengeance on that part of the monarchy which still acknowledged subjection. Upon his arrival, therefore, in England, the began to lay the blame of this ill success upon his barons, who, he pretended, had deserted his standard in Normandy. To punish

them for this imputed offence, he levied large sums upon their estates and effects, under colour of preparations for a Norman expedition. He then summoned all his barons to attend him; but capriciously deferred the execution of his projects to
[1205.] another opportunity. The year following he put to sea, as if with a firm resolution to do wonders; but returned soon after, without making the smallest attempt. Another year elapsed, when he promised that he would then redeem his country's reputation by a most signal blow. He set sail, landed at Rochelle, marched to Angers,
[1206.] laid the city in ashes; and hearing that the enemy were preparing to oppose him, he re-embarked his troops, and returned once more to his indignant country, loaden with shame and confusion.

Hitherto John was rather hateful to his subjects than contemptible; they rather dreaded than despised him. But he soon showed that he might be offended, if not without resentment, at least with impunity. It was the fate of this vicious prince to make those the enemies of himself whom he wanted abilities to make the enemies of each other. The clergy had for some time acted as a community independent of the crown, and had their elections of each other generally confirmed by the pope, to whom alone they owned subjection. However, the election of archbishops had for some time been a continual subject of dispute between the suffragan bishops and the Augustine monks; and both had precedents to confirm their pretensions. Things being in this situation, Hu-

bert, the archbishop of Canterbury, died: and the Augustine monks, in a very private manner, made choice of Reginald, their sub-prior. The bishops exclaimed at this election, as a manifest invasion of their privileges; and a furious theological contest was likely to ensue. A politic prince would have seized such a conjuncture with joy; and would have managed the quarrel in such a manner, as to enfeeble the exorbitant power of the clergy by inflaming their mutual animosity. But John was not a politic prince. He immediately sided with the suffragan bishops; and John de Grey, bishop of Norwich, was unanimously chosen. To decide the claims of both parties, it was expedient to appeal to the see of Rome: an agent was sent by the bishops to maintain their cause, while the monks dispatched twelve of their order to support their pretensions. Innocent III. who then filled the chair, possessed an unbounded share of power, and his talents were equal to the veneration in which he was held. He seized with avidity that conjuncture which John failed to use: and vacating the claims of both parties, as uncanonical and illegal, he enjoined the monks to choose cardinal Stephen Langton, an Englishman, [1207.] then at the court of Rome, as a fit person to fill the vacant dignity.

This was an encroachment of power that the see of Rome had long been aiming at, and was now resolved to maintain. The being able to nominate to the greatest dignity in the kingdom, next to that of the king, was an acquisition that would effectually give the court of Rome an au-

thority which it had hitherto vainly pretended to assume. So great an insult was to be introduced to this weak prince with persuasions adapted to his capacity; and the pope accordingly sent him a most affectionate letter, with a present of four gold rings set with precious stones. He begged John to consider seriously the form of the rings, their number, their matter, and their colour. Their form being round, shadowed out eternity, for which it was his duty to prepare. Their number, four, denoted the four cardinal virtues, which it was his duty to practise. Their matter being gold, the most precious of metals, denoted wisdom, the most precious of accomplishments, which it was his duty to acquire: and as to their colour, the green colour of the emerald represented faith; the yellow of the sapphire, hope; the redness of the ruby, charity; and the splendour of the topaz, good works. John received the rings, and thought all the pope's illustrations very beautiful, but resolved not to admit Stephen Langton as archbishop of Canterbury.

As all John's measures were conducted with violence, he sent two knights of his train, who were fit instruments for such a prince, to expel the monks from their convent, and to take possession of their revenues. The pope was not displeased at this instance of his impetuosity; he was sensible that John would sink in the contest, and therefore persevered the more vigorously in his pretensions. He began his attempts to carry his measures by soothing, imploring, and urging; he proceeded to threats, and at last sent three

English prelates to the king to inform him, that if he persevered in his disobedience he would put the kingdom under the sentence of an interdict. The other prelates threw themselves on their knees before the king; entreated him in the most earnest manner not to bring upon them the resentment of the holy tribunal; exhorted him to receive the new primate, and to restore the monks to their convent, from which they had been expelled. But these entreaties served only to inflame his resentment. He broke out into the most violent invectives; and swore by God's teeth, his usual oath, that if the kingdom was put under an interdict, he would banish the whole body of the clergy, and confiscate all their possessions. This idle threat only served to hasten the resentment of the pontiff. Perceiving the king's weakness, and how little he was loved by his subjects, he issued at last the sentence of the interdict, which was so much dreaded by the whole nation. This [1208.] instrument of terror in the hands of the see of Rome, was calculated to strike the senses in the highest degree, and to operate upon the superstitious minds of the people. By it a stop was immediately put to divine service, and to the administration of all the sacraments but baptism. The church-doors were shut, the statues of the saints were laid on the ground. The dead were refused Christian burial, and were thrown in the ditches and on the highways, without the usual rites, or any funeral solemnity. Marriage was celebrated in the church-yards, and the people were prohibited from the use of meat, as in times

of public penance. They were debarred from all pleasure; they were prohibited from shaving their beards, from saluting each other, and giving any attention to their apparel. Every circumstance seemed calculated to inspire religious terror, and testified the apprehensions of divine vengeance and indignation. Against such calamity, increased by the deplorable lamentations of the clergy, it was in vain that John exerted all his authority, threatened and punished, and opposed the terrors of his temporal power to their ecclesiastical censures. It was in vain that he banished some, and confined others: it was in vain that he treated the adherents of Langton with rigour, and ordered all the concubines of the clergy to be imprisoned. The church conquered by perseverance; and John saw himself every day growing more obnoxious and more contemptible. The barons, many of whose families he had dishonoured by his licentious amours, were almost to a man his declared enemies. The clergy represented him in the most odious light to the people: and nothing remained to him but the feeble relics of that power which had been so strongly fixed by his grandfather, that all his vices were hitherto unable totally to overthrow it.

In the mean time, the pope, seeing all the consequences he expected attending the interdict, and that the king was thus rendered perfectly disagreeable to his subjects, resolved to second his blow; and, while the people were yet impressed with terror, determined to take advantage of their consternation. The church of Rome had artificially con-

trived a gradation of sentences; by which, while she inflicted one punishment, she taught the sufferers to expect more formidable consequences from those which were to ensue. On the back of the interdict, therefore, came the sentence of excommunication, by which John was at once rendered impious and unfit for human society.

[1209.] No sooner was this terrible sentence denounced against him, than his subjects began to think of opposing his authority. The clergy were the first to set an example of disobedience. Geoffrey, archdeacon of Norwich, who was intrusted with a considerable office in the court of exchequer, resigned his employment; which so exasperated the king that he had him confined, and, ordering his head to be covered with a great leaden cope, thus kept him in torment till he died. Most of the other bishops, dreading his fate, left the kingdom. Many of the nobility also, terrified at the king's tyranny, went into voluntary exile; and those who remained employed their time in cementing a confederacy against him. The next gradation of papal indignation was to absolve John's subjects from their oaths of [1211.] fidelity and allegiance, and to declare every one excommunicated who had any commerce with him in public or private, at his table, in his council, or even in private conversation. John, however, still continued refractory; and only one step more remained for the pope to take, and this was to give away the kingdom to another.

No situation could be more deplorable than that of John, upon this occasion. Furious at his

indignities, jealous of his subjects, and apprehending an enemy in every face,—it is said that, fearing a conspiracy against his life, he shut himself up a whole night in the castle of Nottingham, and suffered none to approach his person. Being informed that the king of Wales had taken part against him, he ordered all the Welsh hostages to be instantly put to death. Being apprehensive of the fidelity of his barons, he required their sons and daughters as hostages for their obedience. When his officers repaired on this odious duty to the castle of William de Braouse, a nobleman of great note, that baron's wife resolutely told them, that she would never trust her children in the hands of a man who had so barbarously murdered his own nephew. John was so provoked at this merited reproach, that he sent a body of forces to seize the person of Braouse, who fled into Ireland with his wife and family. But John's indignation pursued them there; and, discovering the unhappy family in their retreat, he seized the wife and son, whom he starved to death in prison, while the unfortunate father narrowly escaped by flying into France.

Meanwhile the pope, who had resolved on giving the kingdom to another, was employed in fixing upon a person who was willing to accept the donation, and had power to vindicate his claim. Philip, the king of France, seemed the fittest for such an undertaking; he was politic and powerful; he had already despoiled John of his continental dominions, and was the most likely person to deprive him of the remainder. To him, therefore,

the pope made a tender of the kingdom of England; and Philip ardently embraced the [1212.] offer. To strengthen the hands of Philip still more, the pope published a crusade against the deposed monarch all over Europe, exhorting the nobility, the knights, and men of every condition, to take up arms against that persecutor of the church, and to enlist under the French banner. Philip was not less active on his part: he levied a great army; and, summoning all the vassals of the crown to attend him at Rouen, he collected a fleet of seventeen hundred vessels in the sea-ports of Normandy and Picardy, already [1213.] devouring in imagination the kingdom he was appointed to possess.

John, who, unsettled and apprehensive, scarcely knew where to turn, was still able to make an expiring effort to receive the enemy. All-hated as he was, the natural enmity between the French and the English, the name of king, which he still retained, and some remaining power, put him at the head of sixty thousand men; a sufficient number indeed, but not to be relied on; and with these he advanced to Dover. Europe now regarded the important preparations on both sides with impatience; and the decisive blow was soon expected, in which the church was to triumph or to be overthrown. But neither Philip nor John had ability equal to the pontiff by whom they were actuated; he appeared on this occasion too refined a politician for either. He only intended to make use of Philip's power to intimidate his refractory son, not to destroy him. He expected more advantages from

his agreement with a prince so abject both in character and fortune, than from his alliance with a great and victorious monarch, who, having nothing else left to conquer, might convert his power against his benefactor. He therefore secretly commissioned Pandolf, his legate, to admit of John's submission, in case it should be offered; and he dictated the terms which would be proper for him to impose. In consequence of this, the legate passed through France, where he beheld Philip's great armament ready to set sail, and highly commended that monarch's zeal and expedition. From thence he went in person, or, as some say, sent over an envoy to Dover, under pretence of negotiating with the barons, and had a conference with John upon his arrival. He there represented to this forlorn prince the numbers of the enemy, the hatred of his own subjects, and the secret confederacy which had been formed in England against him. He intimated, that there was but one way to secure himself from impending danger; which was, to put himself under the pope's protection, who was a merciful father, and still willing to receive a repentant sinner to his bosom. John was too much intimidated by the manifest danger of his situation not to embrace every means offered for his safety. He assented to the truth of the legate's remonstrances, and took an oath to perform whatever stipulations the pope should impose. When he had thus sworn to the performance of an unknown command, the artful Italian so well managed the barons, and so effectually intimidated the king, that he persuaded him to take the most extraordinary oath in all the

records of history, before all the people, kneeling upon his knees, and with his hands held up between those of the legate.

"I, John, by the grace of God, king of England, and lord of Ireland, in order to expiate my sins, from my own free will, and the advice of my barons, give to the church of Rome, to Pope Innocent, and his successors, the kingdom of England, and all other prerogatives of my crown. I will hereafter hold them as the pope's vassal. I will be faithful to God, to the church of Rome, to the pope my master, and his successors legitimately elected. I promise to pay him a tribute of a thousand marks yearly; to wit, seven hundred for the kingdom of England, add three hundred for the kingdom of Ireland." Having thus done homage to the legate, and agreed to reinstate Langton in the primacy, he received the crown, which he had been supposed to have forfeited, while the legate trampled under his feet the tribute which John had consented to pay.

Thus, after all his armaments and expectations, Philip saw himself disappointed of his prey, and perceived that the pope had over-reached him in this transaction. Nevertheless, as he had undertaken the expedition at the pope's request, he was resolved to prosecute the war in opposition to him and all his censures. He laid before his vassals the ill-treatment he had received from the court of Rome; and they all vowed to second his enterprise, except the earl of Flanders, who declared against the impiety of the undertaking. In the mean time, while the French king was resolving to

bring this refractory nobleman to his duty, the English admiral attacked the French fleet in their harbours, where he took three hundred ships, and destroyed a hundred more. Philip finding it impossible to prevent the rest from falling into the hands of the enemy, set fire to them himself, and was thus obliged to give up all designs upon England.

[1214.] John was now once more, by the most abject submissions, reinstated in power; but his late humiliations did not in the least serve to relax his cruelty or insolence. One Peter of Pontefract, a hermit, had foretold, that the king this very year should lose his crown; and for that rash prophecy he had been thrown into Corfe castle: John now determined to punish him as an impostor, and had him arraigned for that purpose. The poor hermit, who was probably some wretched enthusiast, asserted the truth of his prediction, alleging that the king had given up his crown to the pope from whom he again received it. This argument would have prevailed with any person less cruel than John. The defence was supposed to augment the crime. Peter was dragged at horses' tails to the town of Wareham, and there hanged on a gibbet with his son.

In this manner, by repeated acts of cruelty, by expeditions without effect, and humiliations without reserve, John was long become the detestation of all mankind. Equally odious and contemptible, both in public and private life, he affronted the barons by his insolence, and dishonoured their families by his debaucheries; he enraged them by his tyranny, and impoverished them by his exactions.

But now, as he had given up the independence of his kingdom to a foreign power, his subjects thought they had a right to claim a part of that power which he had been granting so liberally to strangers.

The barons had been long forming a confederacy against him; but their union was broken, or their aims disappointed, by various and unforeseen accidents. Nothing at present seemed so much to forward their combinations as the concurrence of Langton the primate, who, though forced upon the kingdom by the see of Rome, amply compensated to his countrymen by his attachment to their real interests.

This prelate, either a sincere friend of the people, or a secret enemy to the king, or supposing that, in their mutual conflict, the clergy would become superior; or, perhaps, instigated by all these motives, had formed a plan for reforming the government, which still continued in a very fluctuating situation. At a synod of his prelates and clergy, convened in St. Paul's on pretence of examining the losses sustained by the exiled bishops, he conferred privately with a number of barons, and expatiated upon the vices and the injustice of their sovereign. He showed them a copy of Henry the First's charter, which was luckily found in a monastery; for so little had those charters (extorted from kings at the ircoronation) been hitherto observed, that they soon came into disuse, and were shortly after buried in oblivion. There was but one copy of this important charter now left in the kingdom; and that, as was observed, was found in the rubbish of an obscure monastery. However, it

contained so many articles tending to restore and fix the boundaries of justice, that Langton exhorted the confederating barons to insist on the renewal and observance of it. The barons swore they would lose their lives sooner than forego those claims that were founded on nature, on reason, and precedent. The confederacy every day began to spread wider, and to take in almost all the barons of England.

A new and a more numerous meeting was summoned by Langton, at St. Edmund's-bury, under colour of devotion. He again produced to the assembly the charter of Henry, and renewed his exhortations to continue stedfast and zealous in their former laudable conspiracy. The barons, inflamed by his eloquence, and still more by their injuries, as also encouraged by their numbers, solemnly swore before the high altar to adhere to each other, to insist on their demands, and to persevere in their attempts until they obtained redress. They agreed, that after Christmas they would prefer their common petition in a body; and in the mean time separated, with resolutions of putting themselves in a posture of defence, to enlist men, and fortify their castles. Pursuant to their promise and obligations, [1215.] they repaired, in the beginning of January, to London, accoutred in military garb and equipage, and presented their demands to the king; alleging that he had promised to grant them, at the time he was absolved from his excommunication, when he consented to a confirmation of the laws of Edward the Confessor. On the other hand, John, far from complying with their request, resented

their presumption, and even insisted upon a promise under their hands and seals, that they would never demand, or attempt to extort, such privileges for the future. This, however, they boldly refused, and considered as an unprecedented act of power; so that, perceiving their unanimity, in order for a while to break their combination, he desired further time to consider of an answer to their demands. He promised, that at the festival of Easter he would give a positive reply to their petition; and offered them the archbishop of Canterbury, the bishop of Ely, and the earl mareschal, as sureties for fulfilling his engagements. The barons accepted the terms, and peaceably returned to their habitations. They saw their own strength, and were certain at any time to enforce their demands.

Freedom could never have found a more favourable conjuncture for its exertions than under the government of a weak and vicious monarch, such as John was, whose resistance only served to give splendour to every opposition. Although he had granted the barons assurances of his good intentions, yet nothing was further from his heart than complying with their demands. In order to break their league, he had recourse to the power of the clergy, of whose influence he had experience from his own recent misfortunes. He courted their favour, by granting them a charter, establishing all those rights of which they were already in possession, and which he now pretended liberally to bestow, when he had not the ability to refuse. He took the cross to ingratiate himself still further; and, that he might enjoy the privileges annexed to

the profession, he appealed to the pope against the usurpation of his barons, and craved his holy protection. Nor were the barons remiss in their appeals to the pontiff. They alleged that their just privileges were abridged, and entreated the interposition of his authority with the king. The pope did not hesitate in taking his part. A king who had already given up all to his protection, who had regularly paid the stipulated tributes, and who took every occasion to advance the interests of the church, was much more meritorious in his eyes than a confederacy of barons, whom, at best, he could manage with difficulty, and whose first endeavours would perhaps be to shake off his authority. He therefore wrote letters to England, reproaching Langton and the bishops for favouring these dissensions, and commanding them to promote peace between the parties. He exhorted the barons to conciliate the king by humble entreaties; and promised, upon their obedience, to interpose his own authority in favour of such of their petitions as he should find to be just. At the same time he annulled their associations, and forbad them to engage in any confederacy for the future.

Neither the bishops nor barons paid the least regard to the pope's remonstrance; and as for John's pretences of taking the cross, they turned them into ridicule. They had for some time detected the interested views of the see of Rome. They found that the pope consulted only his own interests, instead of promoting those of the church or the state. They continued, indeed, to reverence his authority as much as ever, when exerted

on points of duty; but they now began to distinguish between his religious and his political aims, adhering to the one, and rejecting the other. The bishops and barons, therefore, on this occasion, employed all their arts and emissaries to kindle a spirit of revolt in the nation; and there was now scarce a nobleman in the kingdom who did not either personally engage in the design, or secretly favour the undertaking. After waiting till Easter, when the king promised to return them an answer, they met by agreement at Stamford. There they assembled a force of above two thousand knights, and a body of foot to a prodigious number. Thence elated with their power, they marched to Brackley, about twenty miles from Oxford, the place where the court then resided. John, hearing of their approach, sent the archbishop of Canterbury, the earl of Pembroke, and others of his council, to know the particulars of their request, and what those liberties were which they so earnestly importuned him to grant. The barons delivered a schedule, containing the chief articles of their demands, and of which the charters of Henry and Edward formed the ground-work. No sooner were they shown to the king than he burst into a furious passion, and asked why the barons did not also demand his kingdom; swearing that he would never comply with such exorbitant demands. But the confederacy was now too strong to fear much from the consequences of his resentment. They chose Robert Fitzwalter for their general, whom they dignified with the titles of "Mareschal of the army of God, and of the Holy Church," and pro-

ceeded without further ceremony to make war upon the king. They besieged Northampton, they took Bedford, and were joyfully received into London. They wrote circular letters to all the nobility and gentlemen who had not yet declared in their favour, and menaced their estates with devastation in case of refusal or delay.

In the mean time the timid king was left with a mean retinue of only seven knights, at Odiham in Hants, where he vainly endeavoured to avert the storm, by the mediation of his bishops and ministers. He appealed to Langton against these fierce remonstrants, little suspecting that the primate himself was leagued against him. He desired him to fulminate the thunders of the church upon those who had taken arms against their prince; and aggravated the impiety of their opposition, as he was engaged in the pious and noble duties of the crusade. Langton permitted the tyrant to waste his passion in empty complaints, and declared he would not pass any censure where he found no delinquent. He promised indeed that much might be done, if some foreign auxiliaries, whom John had lately brought over, were dismissed; and the weak prince, supposing his advice sincere, disbanded a great number of Germans and Flemings, whom he had retained in his service. When the king had thus left himself without protection, he thought it was the duty of Langton to perform his promise, and to give him the aid of the church, since he had discarded all temporal assistants. But what was his surprise, when the archbishop refused to excommunicate a single baron, and peremptorily op-

pose his commands! John, stung with resentment and regret, knew not where to turn for advice or comfort: as he had hitherto sported with the happiness of mankind, he could not reasonably complain if his people secretly rejoiced in his sufferings. He now began to think that any terms were to be complied with; and that it was better to reign a limited prince, than sacrifice his crown, and perhaps his life, to ambition. But first he offered to refer all differences to the pope alone, or to eight barons, four to be chosen by himself, and four by the confederates. This the barons scornfully rejected. He then assured them that he would submit at discretion, and that it was his supreme pleasure to grant all their demands: a conference was accordingly appointed, and all things adjusted for this most important treaty.

The ground where the king's commissioners met the barons, was between Staines and Windsor, at a place called Runimede, still held in reverence by posterity, as the spot where the standard of freedom was first erected in England. There the barons appeared, with a vast number of knights and warriors, on the fifteenth day of June, while those on the king's part came a day or two after. Both sides encamped apart, like open enemies. The debates between power and precedent are generally but of short continuance. The barons, determined on carrying their aims, would admit of few abatements; and the king's agents being for the most part in their interests, few debates ensued. After some days, the king, with a facility that was somewhat suspicious, signed and sealed the charter re-

quired of him; a charter which continues in force to this day, and is the famous bulwark of English liberty, known by the name of MAGNA CHARTA. This famous deed either granted or secured very important privileges to those orders of the kingdom that were already possessed of freedom, namely, to the clergy, the barons, and the gentlemen: as for the inferior and the greatest part of the people, they were still treated as slaves; and it was long before they could come to a participation of legal protection.

The clergy, by this charter, had their former grants confirmed. All check upon appeals to Rome was removed, by allowance to every man to depart the kingdom at pleasure; and the fines upon the clergy, for any offence, were ordained to be proportionable to their temporal, not their ecclesiastical possessions. With respect to the barons, they were secured in the custody of the vacant abbeys and convents which were under their patronage. The reliefs or duties to be paid for earldoms, baronies, and knights' fees, were fixed, which before were arbitrary. This charter decreed, that barons should recover the lands of their vassals, forfeited for felony, after being a year and a day in possession of the crown; that they should enjoy the wardships of their military tenants, who held other lands of the crown by a different tenure; that a person knighted by the king, though a minor, should enjoy the privileges of a full-grown man, provided he was a ward of the crown. It enacted, that heirs should be married without disparagement; and before the marriage was contracted,

the nearest relations were to be informed of it. No scutage, or tax, was to be imposed upon the people by the great council of the nation, except in three particular cases; the king's captivity, the knighting his eldest son, and the marrying his eldest daughter. When the great council was to be assembled, the prelates, earls, and great barons, were to be called to it by a particular writ, the inferior barons by the summons of the sheriff. It also ordained, that the king should not seize any baron's land for a debt to the crown, if the baron possessed personal property sufficient to discharge the debt. No vassal was to be allowed to sell so much of his land, as to incapacitate him from performing the necessary service to his lord. With respect to the people, the following were the principal clauses calculated for their benefit. It was ordained, that all the privileges and immunities, granted by the king to his barons, should be also granted by the barons to their vassals. One weight and one measure, it was declared, shall be observed throughout the whole kingdom; merchants shall be allowed to transact all business, without being exposed to any arbitrary tolls and impositions; they, and all freemen, shall be allowed to go out of the kingdom, and return to it at pleasure; London, and all cities and boroughs, shall preserve their ancient liberties, immunities, and free customs; aids or taxes shall not be required of them, except by the consent of the great council; no towns or individuals shall be obliged to make or support bridges, but by ancient customs; the goods of every freeman shall be disposed according to his will; if he die intestate, his heirs shall suc-

ceed to them; no officer of the crown shall take any horses, carts, or wood, without the consent of the owner; the king's courts of justice shall be stationary, and shall no longer follow his person; they shall be open to every one, and justice shall no longer be bought, refused, or delayed by them; the sheriffs shall be incapacitated to hold pleas of the crown, and shall not put any person npon his trial from rumour or suspicion alone, but upon the evidence of lawful witnesses; no freeman shall be taken or imprisoned, or dispossessed of his free tenement and liberties, or outlawed, or banished, or anywise hurt or injured, unless by the legal judgement of his peers, or by the law of the land; and all who suffered otherwise in this, and the two former reigns, shall be restored to their rights and possessions; every freeman shall be fined in proportion to his fault, and no fine shall be levied on him to his utter ruin. Such were the stipulations in favour of that part of the people, who, being either merchants, or the descendants of the nobles, or of the clergy, were thus independent of an immediate lord. But that part of the people who tilled the ground, who constituted, in all probability, the majority of the nation, had but one single clause in their favour, which stipulated, that no villain or rustic should by any fine be bereaved of his carts, ploughs, and instruments of husbandry. As for the rest, they were considered as a part of the property belonging to an estate, and passed away with the horses, cows, and other moveables, at the will of the owner.

This great charter being agreed to by all, signed

by both parties, and ratified, the barons, knowing the perfidious disposition of the king, endeavoured to secure the observance of it by prevailing upon him to appoint twenty-five of their order as conservators of the public liberty. These were to admonish the king, if he should act contrary to his written obligations; and in case of resistance, they might levy war against him, and attack his castles. John, with his usual perfidy, seemed to submit passively to all these regulations, however injurious to majesty; and even sent writs to the sheriffs, ordering them to constrain every one to swear obedience to the twenty-five barons. He pretended that his government was henceforth to undergo a total reformation, more indulgent to the liberty and independence of the people. His subjects therefore flattered themselves with brighter prospects; and it was thought the king's misfortunes had humanised his disposition.

But John's seeming tranquillity was mere dissimulation. The more care his barons had taken to bind him to their will, the more impatient he grew under their restrictions. He burned with desire to shake off the conditions they had imposed upon him. The submissions he had paid to the pope, and the insults he had sustained from the king of France, slightly affected him, as they were his equals; but the sense of his subjection to his own vassals sunk deep in his mind; and he was determined, at all events, to recover his former power of doing mischief. He grew sullen, silent, and reserved. He shunned the society of his former companions, and even retired into the Isle of

Wight, as if to hide his disgrace in solitude. He was still, however, employed in machinations to obtain revenge. He had sent to the continent to enlist a large body of mercenary troops; he had made complaints to the pope of the insurrections of his subjects against him; and the pontiff very warmly espoused his cause. A bull was sent over, annulling the whole charter; and at the same time the foreign forces arrived, whom John intended to employ in giving efficacy to his intentions.

He now no longer took shelter under the arts of dissimulation, but acted the bold tyrant; a character that became him much better. The barons, after obtaining the charter, seemed to have been lulled into a fatal security; and took no measures for assembling their forces in case of the introduction of a foreign army. The king, therefore, was for some time undisputed master of the field, at the head of an army of Germans, Brabantines, and Flemings, all eager for battle, and inspired with the hopes of dividing the kingdom among them. The castle of Rochester was first invested, and, after an obstinate resistance, was obliged to surrender at discretion. John, irritated at the length of the siege, was going to hang the governor and all the garrison, contrary to the laws of war; but, at the intercession of one of his generals, he only put the inferior prisoners to death. After the reduction of this important fortress, the royal interests began to prevail; and two armies were formed, with one of which the king marched northward, subduing all fortresses and towns that lay in his way. The other army, commanded by the earl of Salis-

bury, was equally vigorous and successful; several submitted at his approach, and London itself was in the utmost danger. The foreign mercenaries committed the most horrible cruelties in their march, and ravaged the country in a most dreadful manner, being urged at once by their natural rapacity, and the cruelty of the king. Nothing was seen but the flames of villages and castles; consternation and misery were pictured in the looks of the people; and tortures were every where exercised by the soldiers to make the inhabitants reveal their riches. Wherever the king marched, the provinces were laid waste on each side of his progress; for he considered every estate which was not his immediate property as entirely hostile, and a proper object of military execution.

The barons, reduced to this deplorable situation, their estates destroyed, their liberties annihilated, and their persons exposed to the revenge of a malicious tyrant, lost all power of self-defence. They were able to raise no army in England that could stand before their ravager, and yet they had no hopes from submission. In this desperate exigence they applied to the old enemy of their country, Philip, king of France, and offered to acknowledge Lewis, the eldest son of that monarch, as their sovereign, on condition of his affording them protection against their domestic destroyer. No proffer could have been more agreeable to this ambitious monarch, who long wanted to annex England to the rest of his dominions. He therefore instantly embraced the proposal of the barons, of whom, however, he demanded five-and-twenty hostages

for the performance of their promise. These being sent over, he began to make the most diligent preparations for this expedition, regardless of the menaces of the pope, who threatened Philip with excommunication, and actually excommunicated Lewis some time after. The first detachment consisted of a body of seven thousand men, which he reinforced soon after by a powerful army, commanded by Lewis himself, who landed at Sandwich without opposition.

John, who but just now saw himself in the career of victory, upon the landing of the French army was stopped all of a sudden, and found himself disappointed in his revenge and ambition. The first effect of their appearance was, that most of the foreign troops deserted, refusing to serve against the heir of their monarchy. Many considerable noblemen also deserted his party; and his castles daily fell into the hands of his enemies. Thus England saw nothing but a prospect of being every way undone. If John succeeded, a tyrannical and implacable monarch was to be their tormentor; if Lewis should prevail, the country was ever after to submit to a more powerful monarchy, and was to become a province to France. What neither human prudence could foresee, nor policy suggest, was brought about by a happy and unexpected concurrence of events. Neither John nor Lewis succeeded in their designs upon the people's happiness and freedom.

Lewis, having vainly endeavoured to pacify the pope's legate, resolved to set the pope at defiance, and marched his army against the castle of Ro-

chester, which he quickly reduced. Thence he advanced to London, where the barons and burghers did him homage, and took the oath of fealty, after he had sworn to confirm the liberties and privileges of the people. Though never crowned king of England, yet he exercised sovereign authority, granting charters, and appointing officers of state. But how flattering soever the prospect before him appeared, yet there was a secret jealousy that was destroying his ambition, and undermining all his pretensions. Through a great degree of imprudence, he, on every occasion, showed a visible preference to his natural French subjects, to the detriment of those he came to govern. The suspicions of the English against him were increased by the death-bed confession of the count de Melun, one of his courtiers, who declared to those about him, that it was the intention of Lewis to exterminate the English barons as traitors, and to bestow their dignities and estates on his own French subjects, upon whose fidelity he could safely rely. Whatever truth there might be in this confession, it greatly operated upon the minds of the people; so that the earl of Salisbury, and other noblemen, who had forsaken John's party, now returned to him, and gave no small lustre to his cause.

In the mean time John was assembling a considerable army, with a view to make one great effort for the crown; and, at the head of a large body of troops, he resolved to penetrate into the heart of the kingdom. With these resolutions he departed from Lynn, which, for its fidelity, he had distinguished with many marks of favour, and directed

his route towards Lincolnshire. His road lay along the shore, which was overflowed at high water; but not being apprised of this, or being ignorant of the tides of the place, he lost all his carriages, treasures, and baggage, by their influx. He himself escaped with the greatest difficulty, and arrived at the abbey of Swinsted, where his grief for the loss he had sustained, and the distracted state of his affairs, threw him into a fever, which soon appeared to be fatal. Next day, being unable to ride on horseback, he was carried in a litter to the castle of Sleaford, and thence removed to Newark, where, after having made his will, he died, in the fifty-first year of his age, and the eighteenth of his reign.

This monster's character is too strongly marked in every transaction of his life, to leave the smallest necessity for disentangling it from the ordinary occurrences of his reign. It was destructive to the people, and ruinous to himself. He left two legitimate sons behind him; Henry, who succeeded him on the throne, and was now nine years of age; Richard, who was about seven. He left also three daughters; Jane, married to Alexander II. king of Scots; Eleanor, the wife of the earl of Pembroke; and Isabella, married to the emperor Frederick II. His illegitimate children were numerous, but unnoted.

MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL. THE TANJORE *

CHAPTER XII.

HENRY III.

THE English, being now happily rid of a tyrant, who threatened the kingdom with destruction, had still his rival to fear, who only aimed at gaining the crown, to make it subservient to that of France. The partiality of Lewis on every occasion was the more disgusting, as it was the less concealed. The diffidence which he constantly discovered of the fidelity of the barons, increased that jealousy which was so natural for them to entertain on the present occasion. An accident happened, which rendered him still more disagreeable to his new subjects. The government of the castle of Hertford becoming vacant, it was claimed as of right by Robert Fitzwalter, a nobleman who had been extremely active in his service: but his claim was rejected. It was now, therefore, apparent that the English would be excluded from every trust under the French government, and that foreigners were to engross all the favour of their new sovereign. Nor was the excommunication denounced against Lewis, by the pope, entirely without its effect. In fact, the people were easily persuaded to consider a cause as impious and profane, for which they had already entertained an insurmountable aversion.

In this disposition of the people, the claims of any native, with even the smallest pretensions to fa-

vour, would have had a most probable chance of succeeding. A claim was accordingly made in favour of young Henry, the son of the late king, who was now but nine years of age. The earl of Pembroke, a nobleman of great worth and valour, who had faithfully adhered to John in all the fluctuations of his fortune, was at the time of that prince's death, mareschal of England, and consequently at the head of the army. This nobleman determined to support the declining interests of the young prince, and had him solemnly crowned by the bishops of Winchester and Bath, at Gloucester. In order also to enlarge and confirm his own authority upon the present occasion, a general council of the barons was summoned at Bristol, where the earl was chosen guardian to the king, and protector of the kingdom. His first act was highly pleasing to the people, and reconciled them to the interests of the young prince; he made young Henry grant a new charter of liberties, which contained very few exceptions from that already extorted from his predecessor. To this was added a charter, ascertaining the jurisdiction and the boundaries of the royal forests, which thence was called the Charta de Foresta. By this it was enacted, that all the forests which had been inclosed since the reign of Henry the Second should be restored to the people, and new perambulations made for that purpose. Offences on the forests were no longer declared to be capital, but punishable by gentler laws; and all the proprietors of land were gratified with a power of cutting and using their own wood at pleasure. To these measures, which

gave universal satisfaction, Pembroke took care to add his more active endeavours against the enemy. He wrote letters, in the king's name, to all the malcontent barons, assuring them of his resolution to govern them by their own charters; and represented the danger which they incurred by their adherence to a French monarch, who only wanted to oppress them. These assurances were attended with the desired effect. The party in the interests of Lewis began to lose ground every day, by the desertion of some of its most powerful leaders. The earls of Salisbury, Arundel, and Warrenne, with William Mareschal, eldest son of the protector, came over to the young king; and all the rest of the barons appeared desirous of an opportunity of following their example.

The protector was so much strengthened by these accessions, that he took the field; [1217.] but the French army appearing, he was obliged to retire. The count de Perche, who commanded for Lewis, was so elated with his superiority, that he marched to Lincoln; and, being admitted into the town, began to attack the castle, which he soon reduced to extremity. The protector, now finding that a decisive blow was to be struck, summoned all his forces from every quarter, in order to relieve a place of such importance; and he, in turn, appeared so much superior to the French, that they shut themselves within the city, and resolved to take shelter behind the walls. But the garrison of the castle, having received a strong reinforcement, made a vigorous sally upon the besiegers, while the

English army assaulted them from without; and, scaling the walls, entered the city sword in hand. Lincoln was delivered over to be pillaged; the French army was totally routed, the commander in chief was killed, and many of the rest made prisoners of war. This misfortune of the French was but the forerunner of another. Their fleet, which was bringing over reinforcements both of men and money, was attacked by the English, under the command of Philip d'Albiney, and was repulsed with considerable loss. D'Albiney is said to have practised a stratagem against them, to which he owed his victory. Having gained the wind of the French, he ordered his men to throw quick-lime in the faces of the enemy; which blinding them, they were disabled from further defence. These repeated losses served, at length, to give peace to the kingdom. Lewis, finding his cause every day declining, and that it was at last grown wholly desperate, began to be anxious for the safety of his person; and was glad to submit to any conditions favourable to his retreat. He concluded a peace with the protector, in which he agreed to leave the kingdom; and in which he exacted, in return, an indemnity for all his adherents. Thus ended a civil war which had for some time drenched the kingdom in blood; and in which not only its constitution, but all its happiness, seemed irretrievable. The death of John, and the abdication of Lewis, were circumstances that could hardly be expected even by the most sanguine well-wishers of their country. The one was brought about by accident,

and the other by the prudence and intrepidity of the earl of Pembroke, who did not long survive his success.

The young king was of a character the very opposite to that of his father: as he grew up to man's estate, he was found to be gentle, merciful, and humane; he appeared easy and good-natured to his dependants, but no way formidable to his enemies. Without activity or vigour, he was unfit to conduct in war; without distrust or suspicion, he was imposed upon in time of peace. A king of such beneficent and weak qualifications was very little fitted to hold the reins of a kingdom such as England was at that time, where every order was aspiring to independence, and endeavouring to plume themselves with the spoils of the prerogative. The protector was succeeded in his office by Peter, bishop of Winchester, and Hubert de Burgh, high justiciary; but [1219.] no authority in the governors could control a people who had been long used to civil discord, and who caught every slight occasion to magnify small offences into public grievances. The nobles were now, in effect, the tyrants of the people; for, having almost totally destroyed the power of the crown, and being encouraged by the weakness of a minority, they considered the laws as instruments made only for their defence, and with which they alone were to govern. They therefore retained by force the royal castles which they had usurped during the former convulsions; they oppressed their vassals; they infested their weaker neighbours; and they invited all disorderly people to

take protection under their authority. It is not then to be wondered, that there were many complaints against those who were placed over them. Hubert de Burgh, who took the lead in the government, experienced many conspiracies formed not only against his authority but his person; and so little did the confederates regard secrecy, that they openly avowed their intentions of removing him from his office. When they were required by him to give up their castles, they not only refused, but several of them entered into a confederacy to surprise London; and, with the earls of Chester and Albemarle at their head, they advanced as far as Waltham with that intention. At that time, however, their aims were frustrated by the diligence of the government; but they did not desist from their enterprise: for, meeting some time after at Leicester, they endeavoured to seize the king, but found themselves disappointed in this, as in their former attempt. In this threatening commotion, the power of the church was obliged to interpose; and the archbishops and prelates threatened the barons with the sentence of excommunication, if they should persist either in their attempts upon the king or in detaining his castles. This menace at last prevailed. Most of the fortresses were surrendered; and the number at that time is said to have amounted to above a thousand. But though Henry gained this advantage by the prudence and perseverance of his minister, yet his power still rested upon a very weak foundation. A contest with his brother Richard, who had amassed such sums of money as to be reckoned

the richest prince in Europe, soon showed the weakness both of his power and his disposition. Richard had unjustly expelled an inferior baron from his manor; and the king insisted upon his restoring him. The other persisting in his refusal, a powerful confederacy was formed, and an army assembled, which the king had neither power nor courage to resist. Richard's injustice was declared legal; and his resentment was obliged to be mollified by grants of much greater importance than the manor which had been the first ground of the quarrel. Thus was the king obliged to submit to all the demands of his haughty vassal; and he had scarce any person who seemed solicitous for his interests, but Hubert de Burgh, whom, nevertheless, he discarded in a sudden caprice, [1231.] and thus exposed his faithful servant to the violent persecution of his enemies. Among the many frivolous crimes objected to him, he was accused of gaining the king's affections by enchantment, and sending the prince of Wales a jewel which he had stolen from the treasury, that rendered the wearer invulnerable. Hubert, when he found his ruin resolved on, was compelled to take sanctuary in a church; but the king was prevailed upon to give orders for his being dragged from thence. Thus irresolute and timid, the orders of one moment contradicted those of the preceding.

He quickly recalled the orders he had given, and again renewed them. The clergy interposed, and obliged the king to permit him to return to his sanctuary; but he was once more constrained to surrender himself a prisoner, and was confined

to the castle of Devizes. From thence Hubert made his escape; and though he afterwards obtained the king's pardon, he never testified any desire to encounter future dangers in his service.

But, as weak princes are never to be without governing favourites, the place of Hubert was soon supplied by Peter des Roches, bishop of Winchester, a Poictevin by birth, one equally remarkable for his arbitrary conduct and for his courage and abilities. Henry, in pursuance of this prelate's advice, invited over a great number of Poictevins and other foreigners, who, having neither principles nor fortunes at home, were willing to adopt whatever schemes their employer should propose. Every office and command were bestowed on these unprincipled strangers, whose avarice and rapacity were exceeded only by their pride and insolence. So unjust a partiality to strangers very naturally excited the jealousy of the barons; and they even ventured to assure the king, that, if he did not dismiss all foreigners from court, they would drive both him and them out of the kingdom. But the bishop of Winchester had taken his measures so well, that he brought over many of the most powerful of the confederates; and the estates of the more obnoxious barons were confiscated, for the benefit of his needy countrymen. In these violent measures the king was a calm consenting spectator; he was contented with present advantages; and while these confiscations procured immediate wealth, he little regarded the consequence. But, as he was chiefly swayed by tumultuary remonstrances, another

confederacy, at the head of which was the archbishop of Canterbury, induced him to dismiss his minister, and to send him and his indigent countrymen out of the kingdom. Encouragement to foreigners was the chief complaint against the king; and it was now expected that the people were to be no longer aggrieved by seeing such advanced above them. But their hopes were quickly disappointed; for the king, having married [1236.] Eleanor, daughter of the count of Provence, transferred his affections to the strangers of that country, whom he caressed with the fondest affection, and enriched with the most imprudent generosity. Places, dignities, and vast treasures, were lavished upon them; many young noblemen, who were wards to the crown, were married to wives of that country; and when the sources of the king's liberality were dried up, he resumed all the grants he had formerly made, in order to continue his favours. The resentment of every rank of people was excited by this mischievous attachment; but their anger was scarce kept within bounds, when they saw a new swarm of these intruders come over from Gascony, with Isabella, the king's mother, who had been some time before married to the count de la Marche. To these just causes of complaint were added the king's unsuccessful expeditions to the continent, his total want of economy, and his oppressive exactions, which were but the result of the former. The kingdom, therefore, waited with gloomy resolution, resolving to take vengeance when the general discontent should arrive at maturity.

To these temporal discontents, those arising from the rapacity of the see of Rome were added. The clergy of England, while they were contending for the power of the pope, were not aware that they were effectually opposing their own interests; for the pontiff, having by various arts obtained the investiture of all livings and prelacies in the kingdom, failed not to fill up every vacancy with his own creatures. His power being established, he now began to turn it to his profit, and to enrich the church by every art of extortion and avarice. [1253.] At this time, all the chief benefices of the kingdom were conferred on Italians. Great numbers of that nation were sent over at one time to be provided for; the king's chaplain alone is said to have held at once seven hundred ecclesiastical livings. These abuses became too glaring even for the blind superstition of the people to submit to; they rose in tumults against the Italian clergy, pillaged their barns, wasted their fields, and insulted their persons. But these were transient obstacles to the papal encroachments. The pontiff exacted the revenues of all vacant benefices; the twentieth of all ecclesiastical livings without exception; the third of such as exceeded a hundred marks a year, and the half of such as were held by non-residents: he claimed the goods of all intestate clergymen; he pretended a right of inheriting all money obtained by usury; and he levied voluntary contributions on the people. The indignities which the people suffered from these intruding ecclesiastics were still more oppressive than their exactions.

On a certain occasion, while the English were complaining of the avarice of their king, and his profusion to foreign favourites, the pope's legate made his triumphal entry into England, and some business induced him to visit Oxford before his return. He was received there with all possible splendour and ceremony, and the most sumptuous preparations were made for his table. One day, as the legate's dinner was preparing, several scholars of the university entered his kitchen, some incited by motives of curiosity, others of hunger: while they were thus employed in admiring the luxury and opulence in which this dignitary was served, and of which they were only to be spectators, a poor Irish scholar ventured to beg relief from the cook, who was an Italian, as were all the legate's domestics. This brutal fellow, instead of giving alms to the poor Irishman, threw a ladle-full of boiling water in his face, and seemed to exult in his brutality. The indignity so provoked a Welsh student who was near, that, with a bow which he happened to have in his hand, he shot the cook dead with an arrow. The legate, hearing the tumult, retired in a fright to the tower of the church, where he remained till night-fall. As soon as he found that he might retire in safety, he hastened to the king, who was then at London, and complained to him of the outrage. The king, with his usual submission to the church, appeared in a violent passion, and offered to give immediate satisfaction by putting the offenders to death. The legate at first seemed to insist upon vengeance, but at length was ap-

peased by a proper submission from the university. All the scholars of that school which had offended him were ordered to be stripped of their gowns, and to go in procession bare-footed, with halters about their necks, to the legate's house, and there were directed humbly to crave his absolution and pardon.

But the impositions of the church appeared in their most conspicuous point of view in a transaction between the pope and the king. The court of Rome, some time before, had reduced the kingdom of Sicily to the same state of vassalage to which England had submitted; but Mainfroy, an usurper, under pretence of governing the kingdom for the lawful heir, had seized upon the crown, and was resolved to reject the pope's authority. As the pontiff found that his own force alone was not sufficient to vindicate his claims, he had recourse to Richard, the king's brother, whose wealth he was not ignorant of; and to him, and his heirs, he offered the kingdom of Sicily, with only one condition, that he should regain it from the hands of the usurper. Richard was too well acquainted with the difficulty of the enterprise to comply with such a proposal; but when it was made to the king himself, the weak monarch, dazzled with the splendour of the conquest, embraced the proposal with ardour. Accordingly, without reflecting on the consequences, or even consulting the parliament, he gave the pope unlimited credit to expend whatever sums he should think proper for completing the conquest of that kingdom. This was what the pope expected and

desired; he soon brought Henry in debtor for more than a hundred thousand marks, a debt which he had never been advised with in the contracting. Henry was mortified at the greatness of the sum, and still more at the little prospect of its being laid out with success; but he dreaded the pope's displeasure, and therefore he resolved to have recourse to parliament for a supply.

In this universal state of indignation, it may readily be imagined that the barons were more liberal of their complaints than their supplies. They determined not to lavish their money on favourites without merit, and expeditions without a prospect of success. The clergy themselves began to turn against their spiritual father; and the bishop of London boldly asserted, that if the king and the pope should take the mitre from his head, he would clap on a helmet. But though the bishops and clergy were obliged to acquiesce in furnishing a part of this absurd expense, the barons still continued refractory; and, instead of supplies, for some time answered with expostulations. They urged the king's partiality to foreigners; they aggravated the injuries of his servants, and the unjust seizures made by his officers from men of mercantile professions. The parliament therefore was dissolved (for so now the general assembly of the nation began to be called), and another soon after was convened with as little success. The urgency of the king's affairs required that money should be procured at any rate; and yet the legate never failed, upon those occasions, to obstruct the king's demands, by

making several for himself. It was now, therefore, that Henry went amongst such of his subjects as were firmly attached to him, and begged for assistance at their own houses. At one time he would get money by pretending to take the cross; at another, he would prevail by asserting that he was resolved to re-conquer his French dominions. At length his barons, perceiving the exigencies to which he was reduced, seemed, in mere pity, willing to grant him aid; and, upon his promising to grant them plenary redress, a very liberal supply was obtained, for which he renewed their charter [1253.] with more than usual solemnity. All the prelates and abbots were assembled, with burning tapers in their hands; Magna Charta was read in their presence; and they denounced sentence of excommunication against all who should infringe its decisions; they then put out their tapers on the ground, and exclaimed, "May every soul that proves false to this agreement so stink and corrupt in hell!" The king had his part in the ceremony, and subjoined, "So help me God, I will inviolably keep all these things, as I am a man, as I am a Christian, as I am a knight, and as I am a king crowned and anointed!" Thus solemn were their mutual engagements; but the wretched Henry no sooner received the supplies for which his parliament had been convoked, than he forgot every article of what he had so solemnly agreed to observe.

Though the king, in the last convention, had solemnly engaged to follow the advice of English counsellors, yet he was directed in all his mea-

sures by foreigners; and William de Valence, on whom he conferred various honours, grasped at every post of profit that was in the royal power to bestow. This imprudent preference, joined to a thousand other illegal evasions of justice, at last impelled Simon Montfort, earl of Leicester, to attempt an innovation in the government, and to wrest the sceptre from the feeble hand that held it. This nobleman was the son of the famous general who commanded against the Albigenses, a sect of enthusiasts that had been destroyed some time before in the kingdom of Savoy. He was married to the king's sister; and, by his power and address, was possessed of a strong interest in the nation, having gained equally the affections of the great and the little. The king was the only person whose favour he disdained to cultivate. He so much disregarded Henry's friendship or enmity, that when the monarch, upon a certain occasion, called him traitor, Leicester gave him the lie, and told him, that if he were not his sovereign, he would soon make him repent of his insult. Being possessed of power too great for a subject, he had long, though secretly, aspired to the throne, and filled all places with complaints of the king's injustice, partiality, and inability to govern. Having at last found his designs ripe for execution, he called a meeting of the most considerable barons; and concealing his private ambition under the mask of public concern, he represented to them the necessity of reforming the state. He exaggerated the oppressions of the lower orders of the people, the violations of the barons' privileges, the conti-

nued plunder of the clergy, and the perfidy of the king. His popularity and his power added weight to his eloquence; and the barons entered into a resolution of redressing public grievances, by taking the government into their own hands.

The first place where this formidable confederacy discovered itself was the parliament-house, where the barons appeared in complete armour. The king, upon his entry, asked them what was their intention; to which they submissively replied, to make him their sovereign, by confirming his power, and to have their grievances redressed. Henry, who was ready enough to promise whatever was demanded, instantly assured them of his intentions to give all possible satisfaction; and for that purpose summoned another parliament at Oxford, to digest a new plan of government, and to elect proper persons who were to be intrusted with the chief authority. This parliament, afterwards called the *mad parliament*, went expeditiously to work upon the business of reformation. Twenty-four barons were appointed, with supreme authority, to reform the abuses of the state, and Leicester was placed at their head. The first step was calculated for the good of the people, as it contained the rude outline of the house of commons, which makes a part of the constitution at this day.
June 11, They ordered that four knights should be
1258. chosen by each county, who should inquire into the grievances of their respective constituents, and attend at the ensuing parliament to give information of their complaints. They ordained that three sessions of parliament should be

regularly held every year; that a new high sheriff should be annually elected; that no wards or castles should be intrusted to foreigners; no new forests made; nor the revenues of any counties let to farm. These constitutions were so just, that some of them have been continued to the present time; but it was not the security of the people, but the establishment of their own power, that this odious confederacy endeavoured to effect. Instead of resigning their power when they had fulfilled the purposes of their appointment, they still maintained themselves in an usurped authority; at one time pretending that they had not as yet digested all necessary regulations for the benefit of the state; at another, that their continuance in power was the only remedy the people had against the faithless character of the king: in short, they resolved to maintain their stations till they should think proper to resign their authority. The whole state accordingly underwent a complete alteration; all its former officers were displaced, and creatures of the twenty-four barons were put in their room; they had even the effrontery to impose an oath upon every individual of the nation, declaring an implicit obedience to all the regulations enacted, and to be yet enacted, by the barons who were thus appointed as rulers. They not only abridged the authority of the king, but the efficacy of parliament, giving up to twelve persons all parliamentary power between each session. Thus these insolent nobles, after having trampled upon the crown, now threw prostrate all the rights of the

people; and a vile oligarchy was on the point of being established for ever.

The first opposition that was made to these usurpations was from that very power which so lately began to take place in the constitution. [1261.] The knights of the shire, who for some time had begun to be regularly assembled in a separate house, now first perceived those grievances, which they submitted to the superior assembly of the barons for redress. These bold and patriotic men strongly remonstrated against the slowness of the proceedings of their twenty-four rulers; and, for the first time, began to show that spirit of just resistance which has ever since actuated their counsels in a greater or a less degree. They represented, that though the king had performed all the conditions required of him, the barons had hitherto done nothing on their part that showed an equal regard for the people; that their own interests and power seemed the only aim of all their decrees; and they even called upon the king's eldest son, prince Edward, to interpose his authority, and save the sinking nation.

Prince Edward was at this time about twenty-two years of age, when the hopes which were conceived of his abilities and his integrity rendered him an important personage in the transactions of the times, and in some measure atoned for his father's imbecility. Upon this occasion his conduct was fitted to impress the people with the highest idea of his piety and justice. He alleged, when appealed to, that he had sworn to the late

Constitutions of Oxford, which, though contrary to his own private sentiments, he yet resolved by no means to infringe. At the same time, however, he sent a message to the barons, requiring them to bring their undertaking to an end, or otherwise to expect the most vigorous opposition to their usurpations. To this the barons were obliged to reply, by publishing a new code of laws, which, though it contained scarce any thing material, yet they supposed would, for a while, dazzle the eyes of the people, until they could take measures to confirm their authority upon a more secure foundation. In this manner, under various pretences and studied delays, they continued themselves in power for three years; while the whole nation perceived their aims, and loudly condemned their treachery. The pope himself beheld their usurpations with indignation, and absolved the king and all his subjects from the oath which they had taken to observe the Provisions of Oxford.

The people now only wanted a leader to subvert this new tyranny imposed upon them; but they knew not where, or to whom, they could [1262.] apply for succour. The king himself, weak, timid, irresolute, and superstitious, was in a manner leagued with those who opposed and depressed his own interests; the clergy, who formerly gave the people redress, were become an independent body, and little concerned in the commotions of the state, which they regarded as tame spectators. In this distressful situation, they had recourse to young prince Edward, who, at a very early age, had given the strongest proofs of courage, of wis-

dom, and of constancy. At first, indeed, when applied to, appearing sensible of what his father had suffered by levity and breach of promise, he refused for some time to take advantage of the pope's absolution, and the people's earnest application; but he was at last persuaded to concur. A parliament was called, in which the king resumed his authority; and the barons, after making one fruitless effort to take him by surprise at Winchester, were obliged to acquiesce in what they could not openly oppose.

In the mean time the earl of Leicester, not discouraged by the ill success of his past enterprises, resolved upon entirely overturning that power which he had already humbled. For this purpose he formed a most powerful confederacy with

[1263.] the prince of Wales, who invaded England with a body of thirty thousand men. To these barbarous ravagers Leicester quickly joined his own forces; and the whole kingdom was soon exposed to all the devastations of a licentious army. The citizens of London also were not averse to his cause. Under the command of their mayor, Thomas Fitz-Richard, a furious and licentious man, they fell upon the Jews, and many of the more wealthy inhabitants, pillaging and destroying wherever they came. The fury of the faction was not confined to London only, but broke out in most of the populous cities of the kingdom; while the king, with his usual pusillanimity, deplored the turbulence of the times, and in vain applied to the pope for his holy protection.

In this distressful state of the nation, nothing

remained but an accommodation with the insurgent barons; and, after some time, a treaty of peace was concluded, but upon the most disadvantageous terms to the king and his party. The Provisions of Oxford were restored, and the barons re-established in the sovereignty of the kingdom. They took possession of all the royal castles and fortresses; they even named the officers of the king's household, and summoned a parliament to meet at Westminster, in order the more fully to settle the plan of their government. By this assembly it was enacted that the authority of the twenty-four barons should continue, not only during the reign of the king, but also during that of prince Edward.

But these were conditions which, though the pusillanimous king could very easily submit to, yet the young prince would by no means acquiesce in. He appealed to the king of France, to whom he consented to refer the subject of his infringed pretension; and when that just monarch declared in his favour, he resolved to have recourse to arms, the last refuge of oppressed royalty. [1264.] Accordingly, summoning the king's military vassals from all quarters, and being reinforced by many of the more equitable barons, he resolved to take the field. His first attempts were successful: Northampton, Leicester, and Nottingham, submitted to his power; and he proceeded into the county of Derby, in order to ravage with fire and sword the estates of such as had espoused the opposite cause. On the other side, the earl of Leicester was besieging Rochester, when he was

informed of the king's successes; upon which he raised the siege, and retreated to London, where he was joined by a body of the citizens amounting to fifteen thousand men. Both armies being nearly equal, they resolved to come to an engagement, and Leicester halted about two miles from Lewes in Sussex; offering, at the same time, terms of accommodation which he well knew the king would reject. Upon the refusal of these with contempt, both sides prepared for a battle with the utmost rancour and animosity. The earl advanced with his troops to Lewes, where the king had drawn up his forces to give him a proper reception. The royal army was formed in three divisions: prince Edward commanded on the right; Richard, the king's brother, who had been some time before made king of the Romans, was posted on the left wing; and Henry himself remained in the centre. The earl's army was divided into four bodies: the first was conducted by Henry de Montfort, son of the general; the second was commanded by the earl of Gloucester; the third was under the command of the earl himself; and the fourth, consisting of Londoners, was under the direction of Nicholas Seagrave. To encourage these insurgents, the bishop of Chichester gave a general absolution to their party, accompanied with assurances, that if any of them fell in the action, they would infallibly be received into heaven, as a reward for their suffering in so meritorious a cause. The battle was begun by prince Edward, who rushed upon the Londoners, placed foremost in the post of honour, with so much fury, that they were un-

able to sustain the charge, but, giving way, fled with great precipitation. The prince, transported with a desire of revenging the insults they had offered to his mother, pursued them four miles off the field of battle, causing a terrible slaughter. While he was making this imprudent use of his victory, the earl of Leicester, who was a skilful commander, pushed with all his forces against the enemies' left wing, soon put them to the rout, and took both the king and his brother prisoners. It was a dreadful prospect, therefore, to the young prince, who was now returning victorious from the pursuit, to behold the field covered with the bodies of his friends, and still more when he heard that his father and uncle were defeated and taken. In this deplorable state, he at first endeavoured to inspire his remaining troops with ardour; but being artfully amused by Leicester with a pretended negotiation, he quickly found his little body of troops surrounded, and himself obliged to submit to such terms as the conqueror thought fit to impose. These were short, and very conformable to his wretched situation. He, and another general, named Henry d'Almain, were to become prisoners, as pledges in the place of the king and his brother, who were to be released; the Provisions of Oxford were to continue in full force, but to be revised by six Frenchmen appointed by the king of France, three prelates, and three temporal noblemen, who, with three more of their own choosing, were to be invested with full powers to settle all disturbances that then subsisted. Such was the convention called the *Mise* of Lewes.

These great advantages were no sooner obtained, than Leicester resolved to possess himself of that power for which he had so long been struggling. Instead of referring the subject in dispute to the king of France, as was agreed on, he kept Richard still a prisoner; and though he had already confined prince Edward in the castle of Dover, he effectually took care to continue the king also in bondage. To add to his injustice, he made use of his name for purposes the most prejudicial to the royal interests; and while he every where disarmed the king's adherents, he was cautiously seen to keep his partisans in a posture of defence. The king, a poor contemptible spectator of his own degradation, was carried about from place to place, and obliged to give his governors directions to deliver their castles into the hands of his enemy. To this usurpation of the king's authority, Leicester added the most barefaced and rapacious avarice. He seized the estates of no less than eighteen barons, as his share of the spoil gained in the battle of Lewes. He engrossed to himself the ransom of all the prisoners; he monopolized the sale of wool to foreign markets; and, to fix himself completely in authority, he ordained that all power should be exercised by a council of nine persons, who were to be chosen by three persons, or the majority of them; and these were the earl himself, the earl of Gloucester, and the bishop of Chichester.

In this stretch of power Leicester was not so entirely secure, but that he still feared the combinations of the foreign states against him, as well as the internal machinations of the royal party. The

king of France, at the intercession of the queen of England, who had taken refuge at his court, actually prepared to reinstate Henry in his dominions: the pope was not sparing in his ecclesiastical censures; and there were many other princes who pitied the royal sufferings, and secretly wished the usurper's fall. The miserable situation of the kingdom, in the end produced the happiness of posterity. Leicester, to secure his ill-acquired power, was obliged to have recourse to an aid till now entirely unknown in England, namely, that of the body of the people. He called a parliament, where, besides the barons of his own party, and several ecclesiastics who were not immediate tenants of the crown, he ordered returns to be made of two knights from every shire; and also deputies from the boroughs, which had been hitherto considered as too inconsiderable to have a voice in legislation. This is the first confirmed outline of an English house of commons. Jan. 20, 1265.
The people had been gaining some consideration since the gradual diminution of the force of the feudal system. The establishment of corporation charters, by which many of the rustic slaves were in a capacity of rescuing themselves from the power of their masters, increased not only the power of the people, but their ardour to be free. As arts increased, the number of these little independent republics, if they may be so called, increased in proportion; and we find them, at the present period, of sufficient consequence to be adopted into a share of the legislature. Such was the beginning of an institution, that has since been the guardian of

British liberty, and the admiration of mankind. In this manner it owed its original to the aspiring aims of a haughty baron, who flattered the people with the name of freedom, with a design the more completely to tyrannize.

A parliament, assembled in this manner to second the views of the earl, was found not so very complying as he expected. Many of the barons, who had hitherto stedfastly adhered to his party, appeared disgusted at his immoderate ambition; and many of the people, who found that a change of masters was not a change from misery to happiness, began to wish for the establishment of the royal family. In this exigence, Leicester, finding himself unable to oppose the concurring wishes of the nation, was resolved to make a merit of what he could not prevent; and he accordingly released prince Edward from confinement, and had him introduced at Westminster-hall, where his freedom was confirmed by the unanimous voice of the barons. But though Leicester had all the popularity of restoring the prince, he was politic enough to keep him still guarded by his emissaries, who watched all his motions, and frustrated all his aims.

On the other hand, prince Edward, who had too much penetration not to perceive that he was made the tool of Leicester's ambition, anxiously watched an opportunity to regain that freedom of which he then enjoyed but the appearance. An opportunity soon offered for procuring him a restoration of liberty and power. The earl of Gloucester, one of the heads of Leicester's party, being discontented

at that nobleman's great power, retired from court in disgust, and went, for safety, to his estate on the borders of Wales. Leicester was not slow in pursuing him thither; and to give greater authority to his arms, carried the king and the prince of Wales along with him. This was the happy opportunity that young Edward long wanted, in order to effect his escape. Being furnished by the earl of Gloucester with a horse of extraordinary swiftness, under a pretence of taking the air with some of Leicester's retinue, who were in reality appointed to guard him, he proposed that they should run their horses one against the other. When he perceived that he had thus sufficiently tired their horses, immediately mounting Gloucester's horse, that was still fresh, he bade his attendants very politely farewell. They followed him indeed for some time; but the appearance of a body of troops belonging to Gloucester soon put an end to the pursuit. This happy event seemed the signal for the whole body of the royalists to rise. The well-known valour of the young prince, the long train of grievances which the people endured, and the countenance of the earl of Gloucester, a man of great power, all combined to increase their numbers, and inspire their activity. An army was soon assembled, which Leicester had no power to withstand; and he saw his hard-earned power every day ravished from him, without being able to strike a single blow in its defence. His son, attempting to bring him a reinforcement of troops from London, was, by a vigorous march of young Edward, surprised, and his army cut to pieces.

It was not long after, that the earl himself, ignorant of his son's fate, passed the Severn, in expectation of the London army; but instead of the troops he expected, he soon perceived that the indefatigable prince was coming up to give him battle. Nor was it without a stratagem that his little army was assaulted. While the prince led a part of his troops by a circuit to attack him behind, he ordered another body of them to advance with the banners of the London army that was just defeated, which, for a long time, the earl mistook for an actual reinforcement, and made dispositions accordingly. At last, however, this proud but unfortunate general perceived his mistake, and saw that the enemy was advancing against him on all sides, with the most regular dispositions and determined bravery. He now, therefore, found that all was lost; and was so struck with dismay, that he could not help exclaiming, "The Lord have mercy upon our souls, for our bodies are doomed to destruction!" He did not, however, abandon all hopes of safety; but drew up his men in a compact circle, and exhorted them to fight like men who had all to gain, or all to suffer. At the same time, he obliged the old king to put on armour, and to fight against his own cause, in the front of the army. The battle soon began; but the earl's army, having been exhausted by famine on the mountains of Wales, were but ill able to sustain the impetuosity of young Edward's attack, who bore down upon them with incredible fury. During this terrible day, Leicester behaved with astonishing intrepidity, and kept up the spirit of the action from two o'clock

in the afternoon till nine at night. At last, his horse being killed under him, he was compelled to fight on foot; and though he demanded quarter, the adverse party refused it, with a barbarity common enough in the times we are describing. The old king, who was placed in the front of the battle, was soon wounded in the shoulder; and not being known by his friends, he was on the point of being killed by a soldier; but crying out, "I am Henry of Winchester, the king!" he was saved by a knight of the royal army. Prince Edward, hearing the voice of his father, instantly ran to the spot where he lay, and had him conducted to a place of safety. The body of Leicester being found among the dead, was barbarously mangled by one Roger Mortimer, and then, with an accumulation of inhumanity, sent to the wretched widow, as a testimony of the royal party's success.

This victory proved decisive; and those who were formerly persecuted now became oppressors in their turn. The king, who was grown vindictive from his sufferings, resolved to take a signal vengeance on the citizens of London, who had ever forwarded the interests of his opponents. In this exigence, submission was their only resource; and Henry was with difficulty dissuaded from destroying the city. He was at last contented to deprive it of its military ensigns and fortifications, and to levy upon the inhabitants a very heavy contribution. Fitz-Richard, the seditious mayor, was imprisoned, and purchased his pardon with the loss of his substance. The rebels every where submitted, [1266.]
or were pursued with rigour. Their castles

were taken and demolished; and scarce any were found that disputed the king's authority. Among the few who still continued refractory, was one Adam de Gourdon, formerly governor of Dunster castle, and very much celebrated for his prodigious strength and great bravery. This outrageous baron maintained himself for some time in the forests of Hampshire, and ravaged the counties of Berks and Surrey. Prince Edward was, at length, obliged to lead a body of troops into that part of the country to force him thence; and attacked his camp with great bravery. Being transported with the natural impetuosity of youth, and the ardour of the action, he leaped over the trench, by which it was defended, attended by a few followers; and thus found himself unexpectedly cut off from the rest of his army. Gourdon soon distinguished him from the rest of his attendants; and a single combat began between these valiant men, which, for a long time, continued doubtful. But the prince's fortune at last prevailed: Adam's foot happening to slip, he received a wound, which disabled him from continuing the action, and he remained at the mercy of the conqueror. Edward was as merciful as he was brave: he not only granted him his life, but introduced him that very night to his consort at Guildford; procured him his pardon and estate, and received him into favour. Gourdon was not ungrateful for such mercy; he ever after followed the prince, and was often found combating by his side in the most dangerous shock of battle. In this manner the generosity of the prince tempered the insolence of victory: strength was gradually re-

stored to the different members of the constitution, that had been so long weakened by the continuance of civil discord.

Edward, having thus restored peace to the kingdom, found his affairs now so firmly established, that it was not in the power of any slight disgust taken by the licentious barons to shake them. The earl of Gloucester, indeed, who had been so instrumental in restoring the king to the crown, thought that no recompense could equal his merits. He therefore engaged once more in open rebellion; but was soon brought to submission by the prince, who obliged him to enter into a bond of twenty thousand marks, never to take part in similar schemes for the future. The kingdom being thus tolerably composed, that spirit of adventure and ardour for military glory, which shone forth in all the prince's actions, now impelled him to undertake the expedition against the infidels in the Holy Land. The crusade was at that time the great object of ambition; all other wars were considered as trifling, and all other successes as mean, in comparison of those gained over the enemies of Christ and his religion. To that renowned field of blood flocked all the brave, the pious, the ambitious, and the powerful.

In pursuance of this resolution, which, though condemned by succeeding fashions of thinking, yet certainly then was prosecuted upon the noblest motives, Edward sailed from England with a large army, and arrived at the camp of Lewis, the king of France, which lay before Tunis, and [1270.] where he had the misfortune to hear of that good

monarch's death before his arrival. The prince, however, no way discouraged by this event, continued his voyage, and arrived at the Holy Land in safety.

He had scarcely departed upon this pious expedition, when the health of the old king began to decline; and he found not only his own constitution, but also that of the state, in such a dangerous situation, that he wrote letters to his son, pressing him to return with all dispatch. The former calamities began to threaten the kingdom again; and the barons, taking advantage of the king's weakness, oppressed the people with impunity. Bands of robbers infested various parts of the nation; and the populace of London once more resumed their accustomed licentiousness. To add to the [1272.] king's uneasiness, his brother Richard died, who had long assisted him with his advice in all emergencies. He therefore ardently wished for the return of his gallant son, who had placed the sceptre in hands that were too feeble to hold it. At last, overcome by the cares of government and the infirmities of age, he ordered himself to be removed, by easy journeys, from St. Edmund's-bury to Westminster; where sending for the earl of Gloucester, he obliged him to swear that he would preserve the peace of the kingdom, and, to the utmost of his power, maintain the interests of his son. That same night he expired; and the next morning the great seal was delivered to the archbishop of York, and the lords of the privy council.

Thus died Henry, in the sixty-sixth year of his age, and the fifty-seventh of his reign, the longest

to be met with in the English annals. He was a prince more adapted for private than for public life; his ease, simplicity, and good nature, would have secured him that happiness in a lower station of which they deprived him upon a throne. However, from his calamities the people afterwards derived the most permanent blessings; that liberty which they extorted from his weakness, they continued to preserve under bolder princes who succeeded him. The flame of freedom had now diffused itself from the incorporated towns through the whole mass of the people, and ever afterwards blazed forth at convenient seasons; so that, in proportion as the upper orders lost, the people were sure to be gainers. In this contest, though they often laid down their lives, and suffered all the calamities of civil war, yet those calamities were considered as nothing, when weighed against the advantages of freedom and security.

MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL, THE TANJORE *

CHAPTER XIII.

EDWARD I.

WHILE the unfortunate Henry was thus vainly struggling against the ungovernable spirit of his subjects, his son and successor, Edward, was employed in the holy wars, where he revived the glory of the English name, and made the enemies of Christianity tremble. He had arrived at the city of Acre, in Palestine, just as the Saracens were sitting down to besiege it. He soon relieved the place, followed the enemy, and obtained many victories, which, though splendid, were not decisive. Such, however, were the enemies' terrors at the progress of his arms, that they resolved to destroy by treachery that valiant commander whom they could not oppose in the field. A tribe of Mahometan enthusiasts had long kept possession of an inaccessible mountain in Syria, under the command of a petty prince, who went, in the Christian armies, under the name of the Old Man of the Mountain, and whose subjects were called Assassins; whence we have since borrowed the name to signify a private stabber. These men, wholly devoted to their commander, and inflamed with a detestable superstition, undertook to destroy any Christian prince or leader who became obnoxious to their party. It was in vain to threaten

them with punishment; they knew the dangers that awaited them; but, resolute to destroy, they rushed upon certain death. Some time before, the capital of this tribe had been taken by the Tartars, and the inhabitants put to the sword; yet there still remained numbers of them that were educated in that gloomy school of superstition; and one of those undertook to murder the prince of England. In order to gain admittance to Edward's presence, he pretended to have letters to deliver from the governor of Joppa, proposing a negotiation; and thus he was permitted to see the prince, who conversed with him freely in the French language, which the assassin understood. In this manner he continued to amuse him for some time, being permitted to have free egress and regress from the royal apartments. It was on the Friday in Whitsun-week that he found Edward sitting in his apartment alone, in a loose garment, the weather being extremely hot. This was the opportunity the infidel had so long earnestly desired; and looking round to see if there were any present to prevent him, and finding him alone, he drew a dagger from his breast, and attempted to plunge it into the prince's bosom. Edward had just time to perceive the murderer's intention, and, with great presence of mind, received the blow upon his arm. Perceiving the assassin about to repeat his blow, he struck him at once to the ground with his foot; and, wresting the weapon from his hand, buried it instantly in his bosom. The domestics, hearing a noise, quickly came into the room, and soon wreaked their vengeance on the body of the perfi-

dious wretch, who had thus abused the laws of hospitality. The wound received by the prince was the more dangerous, as having been inflicted with a poisoned dagger; and it soon began to exhibit some symptoms that appeared fatal. He therefore expected his fate with great intrepidity, and made his will, contented to die in a cause which he was assured would procure him endless felicity. But his usual good fortune prevailed; an English surgeon of extraordinary skill, by making deep incisions, and cutting away the mortified parts, completed the cure, and restored him to health in little more than a fortnight. A recovery so unexpected was considered by the superstitious army as miraculous; nor were there wanting some, who alleged that he owed his safety to the piety of Eleonora his wife, who sucked the poison from the wound, to save his life, at the hazard of her own. However this be, it is probable that the personal danger he incurred, by continuing the war in Palestine, might induce him more readily to listen to terms of accommodation, which were proposed soon after by the soldan of Babylon. He received that monarch's ambassadors in a very honourable manner, and concluded a truce with him for ten years, ten weeks, and ten days. Having thus settled the affairs of Palestine, in the best manner they would admit of, he set sail for Sicily, where he arrived in safety, and there first heard the news of the king's death, as well as that of his own infant son John. He bore the last with resignation, but appeared extremely afflicted at the death of his father; at which when the king of Sicily expressed his surprise,

he observed that the death of a son was a loss which he might hope to repair, but that of a father was irreparable.

Though the death of the king happened while the successor was so far from home, yet measures had been so well taken, that the crown was transferred with the greatest tranquillity. The high character acquired by the prince, during the late commotions, had procured him the esteem and affections of all ranks of men; and, instead of attempting to oppose, their whole wish was to see him returning in triumph. But the prince, sensible of the quiet state of the kingdom, did not seem in much haste to take possession of the throne; and he spent near a year in France before he made his appearance in England. The honours he received from the great upon the continent, and the acclamations with which he was every where attended by the people, were too alluring to a young mind to be suddenly relinquished; he was even tempted to exhibit proofs of his bravery in a tournament, to which he was invited by the count de Chalons, who defied him to a trial of his skill. Impressed with high ideas of the chivalry of the times, he accepted the challenge; and proposed, with his knights, to hold the field against all that would enter the lists. His usual good fortune attended him; and his success had like to have converted a trial of skill into a matter of bloody contention. The count de Chalons, enraged at being foiled, made a serious attack upon the English, in which some blood was idly spilt; but Edward and his knights still maintained the superiority. From Chalons, Edward

proceeded to Paris, where he was magnificently entertained by Philip, king of France, to whom he did homage for the territories the kings of England had possessed in that kingdom. From Paris he set out for Gascony, to curb the insolence of Gaston de Bearne, who had rebelled in his absence. Thence he passed through Montreuil, where he accommodated some differences between the English and Flemings. At length, after various battles, dangers, and fatigues, he arrived in his native dominions, amidst the loud acclamations of his people, and was solemnly crowned at Westminster by the archbishop of Canterbury. [1274.] The joy of all ranks upon this occasion was inexpressible; the feasting continued a whole fortnight at the king's expense; five hundred horses were turned loose, as the property of those who could catch them. The king of Scotland, with several other princes, graced the solemnity, and did homage for the territories which they held under the English crown. Nothing therefore remained to complete the felicity of the people, but the continuance of such prosperity; and this they had every reason to expect from the king's justice, œconomy, and prudence.

As Edward was now come to an undisturbed throne, the opposite interest was proportionably feeble. The barons were nearly exhausted by long mutual dissensions; the clergy were divided in their interests, and agreed only in one point, to hate the pope, who had for some time drained them with impunity: the people, by some insurrections against the convents, appear to have hated the

clergy with equal animosity. These disagreeing orders concurred in one point only, that of esteeming and reverencing the king. In such a conjuncture, therefore, few measures could be taken by the crown that would be deemed oppressive; and we accordingly find the present monarch often, from his own authority alone, raising those taxes that would have been peremptorily refused to his predecessor. However, Edward was naturally prudent; and though capable of becoming absolute, he satisfied himself with moderate power, and laboured only to be terrible to his enemies.

His first care was to correct those disorders which had crept in under the last part of his father's feeble administration. He proposed, by an exact distribution of justice, to give equal protection and redress to all the orders of the state. He took every opportunity to inspect the conduct of all his magistrates and judges, and to displace such as were negligent or corrupt. In short, a system of strict justice, marked with an air of severity, was pursued throughout his reign; formidable to the people indeed, but yet adapted to the ungovernable licentiousness of the times. The Jews were the only part of his subjects who were refused that equal justice which the king made a boast of distributing. As Edward had been bred up in prejudices against them, and as these were confirmed by his expedition to the Holy Land, he seemed to have no compassion upon their sufferings. Many were the arbitrary taxes levied upon them; two hundred and eighty of them were hanged at once,

upon a charge of adulterating the coin of the kingdom; the goods of the rest were confiscated, and all of that religion were utterly banished from the kingdom. This severity was very grateful to the people, who hated the Jews, not only for their tenets, but for their method of living, which was by usury and extortion.

But Edward had too noble a spirit to be content with the applause this petty oppression acquired: he resolved to march against Llewelyn, prince of North Wales, who had refused to do homage for his dominions, and seemed bent upon renouncing all dependence upon the crown of England. The Welch had for many ages enjoyed their own laws, language, customs, and opinions. They were the remains of the ancient Britons who had escaped the Roman and Saxon invasions, and still preserved their freedom and their country uncontaminated by the admission of foreign conquerors. But as they were, from their number, incapable of withstanding their more powerful neighbours on the plain, their chief defence lay in their inaccessible mountains, those natural bulwarks of the country. Whenever England was distressed by factions at home, or its forces called off to wars abroad, the Welch made it a constant practice to pour in their irregular troops, and lay the open country waste wherever they came. Nothing could be more pernicious to a country than several neighbouring independent principalities, under different commanders, and pursuing different interests; the mutual jealousies of such were sure to harass the people; and wherever victory was purchased, it was always at the expense of the ge-

neral welfare. Sensible of this, Edward had long wished to reduce that incursive people, and had ordered Llewelyn to do homage for his territories; which summons the Welch prince refused to obey, unless the king's own son should be delivered as a hostage for his safe return. The king was not displeased at this refusal, as it served to give him a pretext for his intended invasion. [1277.] He therefore levied an army against Llewelyn, and marched into his country with certain assurance of success. Upon the approach of Edward, the Welch prince took refuge among the inaccessible mountains of Snowdon, and there resolved to maintain his ground, without trusting to the chance of battle. These were the steep retreats that had for many ages before defended his ancestors against all the attempts of the Norman and Saxon conquerors. But Edward, equally vigorous and cautious, having explored every part of his way, pierced into the very centre of Llewelyn's territories, and approached the Welch army in its last retreat. Llewelyn at first little regarded the progress of an enemy that he supposed would make a transient invasion, and then depart; but this contempt was turned into consternation, when he saw Edward place his forces at the foot of the mountains, and surround his army, in order to force it by famine. Destitute of magazines, and cooped up in a narrow corner of the country, without provisions for his troops, or pasturage for his cattle, nothing remained but death or submission; so that the unfortunate Welch prince, without being able to strike a blow for his independence, was at last obliged to submit

at discretion, and to receive such terms as the victor was pleased to impose. Llewelyn consented to pay fifty thousand pounds, as a satisfaction for damages; to do homage to the crown of England; to permit all other barons, except four near Snowdon, to swear fealty in the same manner; to relinquish the country between Cheshire and the river Conway; to do justice to his own family; and to deliver hostages for the security of his submission.

But this treaty was only of short duration: the oppression of the conqueror, and the indignant pride of the conquered nation, could not long remain without producing new dissensions. The lords of the marches committed all kinds of injustice on their Welch neighbours; and although Edward remitted the fifty thousand pounds, he laid other restrictions some time after upon Llewelyn, which that prince considered as more injurious.
[1281.] He particularly exacted a promise from him at Worcester, that he would retain no person in his principality that should be disagreeable to the English monarch. These were insults too great to be endured, and once more the Welch flew to arms. A body of their forces took the field, under the command of David, the brother of the prince, ravaged the plain country, took the castle of Hawarden, made Sir Roger Clifford, justice of the marches, who was very dangerously wounded, their prisoner, and soon after laid siege to the castle of Rhudlan. An account of these hostilities being quickly brought to Edward, he assembled a numerous army, and set out with a reso-

lution to exterminate Llewelyn and his whole family, and to reduce that people to such an abject state, that they should never after be able to revolt, or distress their peaceable neighbours. At first, however, the king's endeavours were not attended with their usual success: having [1282.] caused a bridge of boats to be laid over the Menay-frith, a body of forces, commanded by Lord Latimer and De Thonis, passed over before it was finished, to signalize their courage against the enemy. The Welch patiently remained in their fastnesses till they saw the tide flowing in beyond the end of the bridge, and thus cutting off the retreat of the assailants. It was then that they poured down from their mountains with hideous outcries, and, with the most ungovernable fury, put the whole body that had gotten over to the sword. This defeat revived the sinking spirits of the Welch, and it was now universally believed by that superstitious people that Heaven had declared in their favour. A story ran, that it was foretold, in the prophecies of Merlin, that Llewelyn was to be the restorer of Brutus's empire in Britain: a wizard had prognosticated that he should ride through the streets of London with a crown upon his head. These were inducements sufficiently strong to persuade this prince to hazard a decisive battle against the English. With this view he marched into Radnorshire; and passing the river Wye, his troops were surprised and defeated by Edmund Mortimer, while he himself was absent from his army upon a conference with some of the barons of that country. Upon his return, seeing the dreadful situation of

his affairs, he ran desperately into the midst of the enemy, and quickly found that death he so ardently sought for. One of the English captains, recognizing his countenance, severed his head from his body, and it was sent to London, where it was received with extreme demonstrations of joy. The brutal spirit of the times will sufficiently appear from the barbarity of the citizens on this occasion; the head being encircled in a silver coronet, to fulfil the prediction of a wizard, it was placed by them upon a pillory, that the populace might glut their eyes with such an agreeable spectacle. David, the brother of this unfortunate prince, soon after shared the same fate; while his followers, quite dispirited by the loss of their beloved leader, obeyed but slowly, and fought with reluctance. Being at last totally abandoned, he was obliged to hide himself in one of the obscure caverns of the country; but his retreat being soon after discovered, he was taken, tried, and condemned as a traitor. His sentence was executed with the most rigorous severity; he was hanged, drawn, and quartered, only for having bravely defended the expiring liberties of his native country, and his own hereditary possessions. With him expired the government and the distinction of the nation. It was soon after united to the kingdom of England, made a principality, and given to the eldest son of the crown. Foreign conquest might add to the glory, but this added to the felicity of the kingdom. The Welch were now blended with the conquerors; and, in the revolution of a few ages, all national animosity was entirely forgotten.

At the time of the conquest, however, the Welch submitted with extreme reluctance; and few nations ever bowed to a foreign yoke with greater indignation. The bards of the country, whose employment consisted in rehearsing the glorious deeds of their ancestors, were particularly obnoxious to the king, who, considering that while they continued to keep the ancient flame alive he must expect no peace in his new acquisitions, ordered them to be massacred, from motives of barbarous policy at that time not uncommon. This severity he is said to have softened by another measure, equally politic, and far less culpable. In order to flatter their vanity, and amuse their superstition, he left his queen to be delivered in the castle of Caernarvon, and afterwards presented the child, whose name was Edward, to the Welch lords, as a native of their country, and as their appointed prince. The lords received him with acclamations of joy, considering him as a master who would govern them as a distinct people from the English, there being at that time another prince who was heir-apparent to the English crown. But the death of the eldest son, Alphonso, soon after made young Edward, who had been thus created prince of Wales, heir also to the English monarchy; and ever since the government of both nations has continued to flow in one undivided channel.

This great and important conquest being achieved, paved the way for one of still more importance, though not attended with such permanent consequences. Alexander III. king of Scot-

land, had been killed by a fall from his horse, leaving only Margaret, his grand-daughter, heir to the crown, who died some time after. The [1291.] death of this princess produced a most ardent dispute about the succession to the Scotish throne, which was claimed by no less than twelve competitors. That nation being thus divided into as many factions as there were pretenders, the guardians of the realm would not undertake to decide a dispute of so much consequence. The nobility of the country were no less divided in their opinions; and, after long debates, they at last unanimously agreed to refer the contest to the determination of the king of England. The claims of all the candidates were reduced to three, who were the descendants of the earl of Huntingdon by three daughters; John Hastings, who claimed in right of his mother, as one of the co-heiresses of the crown; John Baliol, who alleged his right, as being descended from the eldest daughter, who was his grand-mother; and Robert Bruce, who was the actual son of the second daughter. In this contest, which was referred to Edward, he pretended to wish for the utmost degree of deliberation; and although he had long formed his resolution, yet he ordered all inquiries to be made on the subject, that he might be master of the arguments that could be advanced on any side of the question. In this research, he soon discovered that some passages in old chronicles might be produced to favour his own secret inclinations; and, without further delay, instead of admitting the claims of the competitors, he boldly urged his

own; and, to second his pretensions, advanced with a formidable army to the frontiers of the kingdom.

The Scotish barons were thunderstruck at these unexpected pretensions; and though they felt extreme indignation at his procedure, yet they resolved to obey his summons to meet at the castle of Norham, a place situated on the southern banks of the Tweed, where he convened the parliament of that country. He there produced the proofs of his superiority, which he alleged were unquestionable, and desired their concurrence with his claims; at the same time advising them to use deliberation, and to examine all his allegations with impartial justice. To a proposal that appeared in itself so unreasonable, no immediate answer could be given; for, where all is defective, it is not easy to submit to the combating a part: the barons, therefore, continued silent; and Edward, interpreting this for a consent, addressed himself to the several competitors to the crown; and previous to his appointing one of them as his vassal, he required their acknowledgement of his superiority. He naturally concluded that none of them would venture to disoblige the man who was unanimously appointed to be the arbitrator of his pretensions. Nor was he deceived; he found them all equally obsequious on this occasion. Robert Bruce was the first who made the acknowledgement, and the rest quickly followed his example. Edward, being thus become the superior of the kingdom, undertook next to consider which candidate was the fittest to be appointed under him; or it may

be, as they appeared all indifferent to him, which had the justest claim. In order to give this deliberation the appearance of impartiality, a hundred commissioners were appointed; forty of the number were chosen by the candidates who were in the interests of John Baliol; forty, by those in the interests of Robert Bruce; and twenty, by Edward himself. Having thus fitted matters to his satisfaction, he left the commissioners to sit at Berwick; and went southward, to free their deliberations from all shadow of restraint. The subject of the dispute ultimately rested in this question: Whether Baliol, who was descended from the elder sister, but farther removed by one degree, was to be preferred before Bruce, who was actually the younger sister's son? The rights of inheritance, as at present generally practised over Europe, were even at that time pretty well ascertained; and not only the commissioners, but many of the best lawyers of the age, concurred in affirming Baliol's superior claim. Edward, therefore, pronounced sentence in his favour; and that candidate, upon renewing his oath of fealty to England, was put in possession of the Scotish kingdom, and all its fortresses, which had been previously put into the hands of the king of England.

Baliol being thus placed upon the throne, less as a king than as a vassal, Edward's first step was sufficient to convince the Scots of his intentions to stretch the prerogative to the utmost. Instead of gradually accustoming them to bear the English yoke, and of sliding his new power upon them by

slow and imperceptible degrees, he began at once to give them notice of his intentions. A merchant of Gascony had presented a petition to him, importing that Alexander, the late king of Scotland, was indebted to him in a large sum, which was still unpaid, notwithstanding all his solicitations to Baliol, the present king, for payment. Edward eagerly embraced this opportunity of exercising his new right, and summoned the king of Scotland to appear at Westminster, to answer in person the merchant's complaint. Upon subjects equally trivial, he sent six requisitions, at different times, in one year; so that the poor Scotish king soon perceived that he was possessed of the name only, but not the authority of a sovereign. Willing, therefore, to shake off the yoke of so troublesome a master, Baliol revolted, and [1295.] procured the pope's absolution from his former oaths of homage. To strengthen his hands still more, he entered into a secret treaty with Philip, king of France, which was the commencement of an union between these two nations, that, for so many succeeding ages, was pernicious to the interests of England. To confirm this alliance, the king of Scotland stipulated a marriage between his eldest son and the daughter of Philip de Valois.

Edward, to whom these transactions were no secret, endeavoured to ward the threatened blow, by being the first aggressor; and accordingly summoned John to perform the duty of a vassal, and to send him a supply of forces against an invasion from France, with which state he had for some

time been at variance. He also summoned him to surrender some of his principal forts, and to appear at a parliament which was held at Newcastle. None of these commands, as he well foresaw, being complied with, he resolved to enforce obedience by marching a body of thirty thousand foot, and four thousand horse, into the heart of the kingdom of Scotland. As the Scotish nation had little reliance on the vigour or the courage of their king, they had assigned him a council of twelve noblemen to assist, or, more properly speaking, to superintend his proceedings. They raised an army of forty thousand men for the present emergency, and marched them to the frontiers, which Edward was now preparing to attack. But some of the most considerable of the Scotish nobility, among whom were Robert Bruce and his son, endeavoured to ingratiate themselves with Edward by an early submission, which served not a little to intimidate those who still adhered to their king. The progress, therefore, of the English arms was extremely rapid; Berwick was taken by assault, sir William Douglas, the governor, made prisoner, and a garrison of seven thousand men put to the sword. Elated by these advantages, Edward dispatched earl Warrenne, with ten thousand men, to lay siege to Dunbar; and the Scots, sensible of the importance of that place, advanced with their whole army, under the command of the earls of Mar, Buchan, and Lenox, to relieve it. Although the superiority of number was greatly on their side, yet courage and discipline were entirely on that

[1296.]

of the English. The conflict was of short continuance; the Scots were soon thrown into confusion, and fifteen thousand of their men were slain. The castle of Dunbar, with all its garrison, surrendered the day following; and Edward, who was now come up with the main body of his army, led them onward into the country to certain conquest. The castles of the greatest strength and importance opened their gates to him almost without resistance; and the whole southern part of the country acknowledged the conqueror. The northern parts were not so easily reduced, being defended by the inaccessible mountains, and intricate forests, that deformed the face of that country. To make himself master of this part of the kingdom, Edward reinforced his army with numbers of men levied in Ireland and Wales, who, being used to this kind of desultory war, were best qualified to seek or pursue the latent enemy. But Baliol made these preparations unnecessary; he found that a ready submission was more safe and easy than a fierce resistance drawn out among mountainous deserts, which might be rendered still more dreadful by famine. He hastened, therefore, to make his peace with the victor, and expressed the deepest repentance for his former disloyalty. To satisfy him still farther, he made a solemn resignation of the crown into his hands; and the whole kingdom soon after followed his example. Edward, thus master of the kingdom, took every precaution to secure his title, and to abolish those distinctions which might be apt to keep the nation in its former independence.

He carefully destroyed all records and monuments of antiquity that inspired the people with national pride. He carried away a stone, which the traditions of the vulgar pretended to have been Jacob's pillar, on which all their kings were seated when they were anointed. This, the ancient tradition had assured them, was the mark of their government, and wherever it was placed, their command was always to follow. The great seal of Baliol was broken; and that unhappy monarch himself was carried as a prisoner to London, and committed to custody in the Tower. Two years afterwards he was restored to his liberty, and banished to France, where he died in a private station, without making any further attempts to reinstate himself upon the throne; happier perhaps in privacy than if he had been gratified in the pursuits of ambition.

The cessation which was given to Edward by those successes in his insular dominions, induced him to turn his ambition to the continent, where he expected to recover a part of those territories that had been usurped from his crown during the imbecility of his predecessors. There had been a rupture with France some time before, upon a very trifling occasion. A Norman and English ship met off the coast, near Bayonne, and having both occasion to draw water from the same spring, there happened a quarrel for the preference. This scuffle, in which a Norman was slain, produced a complaint to the king of France, who desired the complainant to take his own revenge, and not bring such matters before him. This the

Normans did shortly after; for, seizing the crew of a ship in the Channel, they hanged a part of the number, together with some dogs, in the presence of all their companions. This produced a retaliation from the English cinque-ports; and the animosity of the merchants on both sides being wrought up to fury, the sea became a scene of piracy and murder. No quarter was given on either side; the mariners were destroyed by hundreds; and at last the affair became too serious for the sovereigns of either side to continue any longer unconcerned spectators. Some ineffectual overtures were made for an accommodation; but Edward, seeing that it was likely to come to an open rupture, gave orders for having his territory of Guienne, upon the continent, put in a posture of defence. Nor was he remiss in making treaties with several neighbouring princes, whose assistance he purchased, though greatly to the diminution of his scanty revenues. He even sent an army, collected in England from the jails, which had been filled in the former reign with robbers, who were now made serviceable to the state. These, though at first successful, under the command of John de Bretagne, earl of Richmond, were soon repulsed by the French army, under the command of Charles, brother to the king of France. Yet it was not easy to discourage Edward from any favourite pursuit. He renewed his attempts upon Guienne, and sent thither an army of seven thousand men, under the command of his brother, the earl of Lancaster. That prince gained, at first, some advantages over the French at Bourdeaux:

but he was soon after seized with a distemper, of which he died at Bayonne.

The king, finding his attempts upon that quarter unsuccessful, resolved to attack France [1297.] upon another, where he hoped that kingdom would be more vulnerable. He formed an alliance with John earl of Holland, by giving him his daughter Elizabeth in marriage; and also with Guy earl of Flanders, whose assistance he procured for the stipulated sum of seventy-five thousand pounds. From these assistances he entertained hopes of being once more able to recover his hereditary dominions; and he accordingly set himself earnestly about providing money for such an arduous undertaking. This was not obtained without the greatest struggles with his clergy and the people; so that when he came to take the field in Flanders, at the head of an army of fifty thousand men, the proper season of action was lost; wherefore the king of France and he were glad to come to an accommodation, by which they agreed to submit their differences to the arbitration of the pope. By this mediation it was agreed between them, that their union should be cemented with a double marriage,—that of Edward with Margaret, Philip's sister; and that of the prince of Wales with Isabella, the French monarch's daughter. Philip was prevailed on to restore Guienne to the English. He agreed also to abandon the king of Scotland, upon condition that Edward should in like manner neglect the earl of Flanders. Thus, after a very expensive war, the two monarchs were obliged to sit down just where they began;

and, instead of making preparations against each other, they resolved to turn the weight of their power upon their weaker neighbours.

But though this expedition was thus fruitlessly terminated, yet the expenses which were requisite for fitting it out were not only burthensome to the king, but even, in the event, threatened to shake him on his throne. In order at first to set the great machine in movement, he raised considerable supplies by means of his parliament; and that august body was then first modelled by him into the form in which it continues to this day. As a great part of the property of the kingdom was now, by the introduction of commerce, and the improvement of agriculture, transferred from the barons to the lower classes of the people, so their consent was thought necessary for raising any considerable supplies. For this reason he issued writs to the sheriffs, enjoining them to send to parliament, along with two knights of the shire (as in the former reign), two deputies from each borough within their county, provided with sufficient powers from their constituents to grant such demands as they should think reasonable for the safety of the state. The charges of these deputies were to be borne by the borough which sent them; and so far were they from considering their deputation as an honour, that nothing could be more displeasing to any borough than to be thus obliged to send a deputy, or to any individual than to be thus chosen. However, the authority of these commoners increased by time. Their union gave them weight; and it became customary

among them, in return for the supplies which they granted, to prefer petitions to the crown for the redress of those grievances under which they supposed the nation to labour. The more the king's necessities increased, the more he found it expedient to give them an early redress, till from requesting the commons proceeded to requiring; and, having all the property of the nation, they by degrees began to be possessed of the power. Such was the constitution of that parliament to which Edward applied for assistance against France. He obtained from the barons and knights a grant of the twelfth of their moveables; from the boroughs an eighth; and from the clergy he resolved to exact a fifth; but he there found an unexpected resistance. This body of men, who had already felt the weight of his necessities, resolved to avail themselves of any pretext rather than thus submit to such a heavy and disproportioned imposition. The pope had some time before issued a bull, prohibiting the clergy from paying taxes to any temporal prince, without permission from the see of Rome; and those of England now pleaded conscience, in refusing to comply with the king's demand. They alleged, that they owed obedience to two sovereigns, a spiritual and a temporal; but that their eternal happiness bound them to obey one, while only their worldly safety led them to acknowledge the commands of the other. Edward was somewhat mortified at their refusal, but employed their own arguments with great force against them. He refused them his temporal protection, ordered his judges to re-

ceive no cause brought before them by the clergy, but to hear and decide all causes in which they were defendants; to do every man justice against them; and to deny them justice even under the greatest injury.

In this outlawed situation they suffered numberless hardships from every ruffian, while the king's officers remained unconcerned spectators of the ravages committed upon them, without incurring the hatred of oppressive or vindictive cruelty. Whenever the clergy ventured from home, they were dismounted from their horses, and robbed of their clothes; the primate himself was attacked on the highway, and stripped of all his equipage and furniture. These severities at length prevailed; and the clergy agreed to lay the sums they were taxed in some church appointed them, which were to be taken away by the king's officers. Thus at once they obeyed the king, without incurring the censures of the pope. But though these sums were very great, they were by no means adequate to the wants of the state. New taxes were therefore arbitrarily imposed. Edward laid a duty of forty shillings a sack upon wool; he required the sheriffs of each county to supply him with two thousand quarters of wheat, and as many of oats, without considering the means by which they were to be obtained. These he levied by the way of loans, promising to pay an equivalent whenever the exigencies of the state were less pressing. Such various modes of oppression were not suffered without murmuring. The clergy were already disgusted to a man; the

people complained at those extortions they could not resist; while many of the more powerful barons, jealous of their own privileges, as well as of national liberty, gave countenance to the general discontent.

The first symptoms of this spirit of resistance appeared upon the king's ordering Humphry Bohun, the constable, and Roger Bigod, the mareschal of England, to take the command of an army that he proposed to send over into Gascony, while he himself intended to make a diversion on the side of Flanders. But these two powerful noblemen refused to obey his orders, alleging, that they were obliged by their offices to attend him only in the wars, and not to conduct his armies. A violent altercation ensued. The king, addressing himself to the constable, cried out, "Sir earl, by God, you shall either go or be hanged." To which the haughty baron replied, "Sir king, by God, I will neither go nor be hanged." This opposition quite defeated his scheme for the conquest of Guienne. He found he had driven prerogative a little too far; and with that presence of mind which always brought him back, when he had gone beyond the line of discretion, he desired to be reconciled to his barons, to the church, and to his people. He therefore pleaded the urgent necessities of the crown, and promised, upon his return from his Flemish expedition, to redress all grievances, to restore the execution of the laws, and to make his subjects compensation for the losses which they had sustained. These professions served to allay the kindling discontents of

the nation during his absence, except that the two noblemen, attended by a great body of cavalry and infantry, took possession of the city gates, and obliged the king's council to sign Magna Charta, and to add a clause, to secure the nation for ever against all impositions and taxes without the consent of parliament. This the council readily agreed to sign; and the king himself, when it was sent over to him in Flanders, after some hesitation, thought proper to do the same. These concessions he confirmed upon his return; and though it is probable that he was averse to granting them, yet he was at last brought to give a plenary consent to all the articles that were demanded of him. Thus, after the contest of an age, Magna Charta was finally established; nor was it the least circumstance in its favour, that its confirmation was procured from one of the greatest and boldest princes that ever swayed the English sceptre.

But though the confirmation of this charter was obtained without much violence, yet it was probable, that the disturbance given by Scotland about the same time might have hastened its final execution. That fierce nation, which had been conquered some time before with so much ease, still discovered a spirit of independence, that no severity could restrain, nor defeats subdue. The earl Warrenne had been left justiciary in that kingdom; and his prudence and moderation were equal to his valour. He therefore protected the people with his justice as he had subdued them by his arms: but being obliged, by the bad state of his health, to leave that kingdom, he left the admini-

stration in the hands of two very improper ministers; the one, whose name was Ormesby, was rigorous and cruel; the other, called Cressingham, was avaricious and mean. Under such an administration little stability could be expected; and their injustice soon drove this distressed people into open rebellion. A few of those who had fled into the most inaccessible mountains from the arms of Edward, took this opportunity to pour down and strike for freedom. They were headed by William Wallace, so celebrated in Scotish story, the younger son of a gentleman who lived in the western part of the kingdom. He was a man of gigantic stature, incredible strength, and amazing intrepidity; eagerly desirous of independence, and possessed with the most disinterested spirit of patriotism. To this man had resorted all those who were obnoxious to the English government; the proud, the bold, the criminal, and the ambitious. These, bred among dangers and hardships themselves, could not forbear admiring in their leader a degree of patience, under fatigue and famine, which they supposed beyond the power of human nature to endure; he soon, therefore, became the principal object of their affection and their esteem. His first exploits were confined to petty ravages and occasional attacks upon the English. As his forces increased, his efforts became more formidable; every day brought accounts of his great actions; his party was joined first by the desperate, and then by the enterprising; at last, all who loved their country came to take shelter under his protection. Thus reinforced, he

formed a plan of surprising Ormesby, the unworthy English minister, who resided at Scone; but though this tyrant escaped the meditated irruption, yet his effects served to recompense the insurgents. From this time, the Scots began to grow too powerful for the English that were appointed to govern them; many of their principal barons joined the insurgents: sir William Douglas was among the foremost openly to avow his attachment; while Robert Bruce secretly favoured and promoted the cause. To oppose this unexpected insurrection, earl Warrenne collected an army of forty thousand men in the North of England, and prepared to attack the Scots, who had by this time crossed the borders, and had begun to ravage the country. He suddenly entered Annandale, and came up with the enemy at Irvine, where he surprised their forces, who, being inferior in number, capitulated, and promised to give hostages for their future fidelity. Most of the nobility renewed their oaths, and joined the English army with reluctance, waiting a more favourable occasion for vindicating their freedom. Wallace alone disdained submission; but, with his faithful followers, marched northwards, with a full intention to protract the hour of slavery as long as he could. In the mean time, Warrenne advanced in the pursuit, and overtook him, where he was advantageously posted, in the neighbourhood of Stirling, on the other side of the river Forth. The earl, perceiving the favourable ground he had chosen, was for declining the engagement: but being pressed by Cressingham, a proud man,

whose private revenge operated over his judgement, the old earl was at last obliged to comply, and he passed over a part of his army to begin the attack. Wallace, allowing such numbers of the English to get over as he thought himself superior to, boldly advanced upon them before they were completely formed, and put them entirely to the rout. Part were pursued into the river that lay in the rear, and the rest were cut to pieces. Among the slain was Cressingham himself, whose memory was so extremely odious to the Scots, that they flayed his dead body, and made saddles of his skin. The earl retired with the remains of his army to Berwick, while his pursuers took such castles as were but ill provided for a siege. Wallace returned into Scotland, after having thus, for a time, saved his country; laden with an immense plunder, with which he for a while dispelled the prospect of famine that seemed to threaten the nation.

[1298.] Edward, who was in Flanders while these misfortunes happened in England, hastened back with impatience to restore his authority, and secure his former conquests. As the discontents of the people were not yet entirely appeased, he took every popular measure that he thought would give them satisfaction. He restored to the citizens of London the power of electing their own magistrates, of which they had been deprived in the latter part of his father's reign. He ordered strict inquiries to be made concerning the quantity of corn which he had arbitrarily seized for the use of his armies, as if he intended to pay the value to the owners. Thus

having appeased, if not satisfied, all complaints, he levied the whole force of his dominions; and, at the head of a hundred thousand men, he directed his march to the North, fully resolved to take vengeance upon the Scots for their late defection.

It may easily be supposed that the Scots, even if united, were ill able to resist such an army, commanded by such a king; but their own mutual dissensions served to render them still more unequal to the contest, and to prepare Edward's way to an easy triumph. The Scots were headed by three commanders, who each claimed an equal share of authority; these were the steward of Scotland, Comyn of Badenoch, and William Wallace, who offered to give up his command, but whose party refused to follow any other leader. The Scotch army was posted at Falkirk, and there proposed to abide the assault of the English. They were drawn up in three separate divisions, each forming a complete body of pikemen, and the intervals filled up with archers. Their horses were placed in the rear, and their front was secured with palisades.

Edward, though he saw that the advantage of situation was against him, little regarded such a superiority, confident of his skill and his numbers; wherefore, dividing his forces also into three bodies, he led them to the attack. Just as he advanced at the head of his troops, the Scots set up such a shout, that the horse upon which the king rode took fright, threw, and afterwards kicked him on the ribs as he lay on the ground; but the intrepid monarch, though sorely bruised with his fall,

quickly mounted again with his usual alacrity, and ordered the Welch troops to begin the attack. These made but a feeble resistance against the Scots, who fought with determined valour; but Edward, seeing them begin to decline, advanced in person at the head of another battalion; and, having pulled up the palisades, charged the enemy with such impetuosity that they were no longer able to resist. In this distress, Wallace did all that lay in the power of man to sustain and avert the shock; but the division commanded by Comyn quitting the field, those of the lord-steward and of Wallace lay exposed to the English archers, who at that time began to excel those of all other nations. Wallace for a while maintained an unequal contest with his pikemen; but finding himself in danger of being surrounded, he was at last obliged to give way, and slowly to draw off the poor remnant of his troops behind the river Carron. Such was the famous battle of Falkirk, in which Edward gained a complete victory, leaving twelve thousand of the Scots, or, some will have it, forty thousand, dead upon the field of battle, while the English had not a hundred slain.

A blow so dreadful had not as yet entirely crushed the spirits of the Scotch nation; and after a short interval they began to breathe from their calamities. Wallace, who had gained all their regards by his valour, showed that he still merited them more by his declining the rewards of ambition. Perceiving how much he was envied by the nobility, and knowing how prejudicial that envy would prove to the interests of his country, he re-

signed the regency of the kingdom, and humbled himself to a private station. He proposed Comyn as the properest person to supply his room; and that nobleman endeavoured to show himself worthy of this pre-eminence. He soon began to annoy the enemy; and not content with a defensive war, he made incursions into the southern counties of the kingdom, which Edward had imagined wholly subdued. They attacked an army of the English lying at Roslin, near Edinburgh, and gained a complete victory. The renown of the Scotish arms soon began to spread dismay among the English garrisons left in that kingdom; and they evacuated all the fortresses of which they had for some time been put in possession. Thus the task of conquest was to be once more performed; and in proportion to their losses the Scots seemed to gather fresh obstinacy.

But it was not easy for any circumstances of bad fortune to repress the enterprising spirit of the king. He assembled a great fleet and army; and, entering the frontiers of Scotland, appeared with a force which the enemy could not think of resisting in the open field. The fleet furnished the land army with all necessary provisions; while these marched securely along, and traversed the kingdom from one end to the other, ravaging the open country, taking all the castles, and receiving the submissions of all the nobles. This complete conquest employed Edward for the space of two years; but he seemed, by the severity of his conduct, to make the natives pay dear for the trouble to which they had put [1303.]

him. He abrogated all the Scotish laws and customs; he endeavoured to substitute those of England in their place; he entirely rased or destroyed all their monuments of antiquity, and endeavoured to blot out even the memory of their former independence and freedom. There seemed to remain only one obstacle to the final destruction of the Scotish monarchy; and that was William Wallace, who still continued refractory, and, wandering with a few forces from mountain to mountain, still preserved his native independence and usual good fortune. But even their feeble hopes from him were soon disappointed; he was betrayed into the king's hands by sir John [1305.] Monteith, his friend, whom he had made acquainted with the place of his concealment, being surprised by him as he lay asleep in the neighbourhood of Glasgow. The king, willing to strike the Scots with an example of severity, ordered him to be conducted in chains to London, whither he was carried amidst infinite crowds of spectators, who flocked to see a man that had often filled the country with consternation. On the day after his arrival he was brought to his trial, as a traitor, at Westminster-hall, where he was placed upon a high chair, and crowned with laurel in derision. Being accused of various imputed crimes he pleaded Not guilty, and refused to own the jurisdiction of the court, affirming that it was equally unjust and absurd to charge him with treason against a prince whose title he had never acknowledged; and as he was born under the laws of another country, it was cruel to try him by those to which he was a

stranger. The judges disregarded his defence; for, considering Edward as the immediate sovereign of Scotland, they found him guilty of high-treason, and condemned him to be hanged, drawn, and quartered; the usual punishment for such offences. This sentence was executed with the most rigorous punctuality; and his head and quarters were exposed in the chief cities of England. Such was the wretched end of a brave man, who had, through a course of many years, with signal perseverance and conduct, defended his native country against an unjust invader.

Robert Bruce, earl of Carrick, was among those on whom the cruel fate of Wallace had made the deepest impression. This nobleman, whose father was one of the competitors for the crown, and whose claims were still secretly pursued, was now in the English army. He never was sincerely attached to the English monarch, whom he was in some measure compelled to follow; and an interview with Wallace, some time before that champion was taken, confirmed him in his resolution to set his country free. But, not being young, he was obliged to give up the flattering ambition of being the deliverer of his people, and to leave it in charge to his son, whose name was Robert Bruce also, and who received the project with ardour. This young nobleman was brave, active, and prudent; and a favourable conjuncture of circumstances seemed to conspire with his aims. John Baliol, whom Edward had dethroned and banished into France, had lately died in that country; his only son was a prisoner; and no one

appeared to dispute the pretensions of young Robert, except Comyn, who was regent of the kingdom; and he also was soon after brought over to second his interests. He therefore resolved upon freeing his country from the English yoke; and although he attended the court of Edward, yet he began to make secret preparations for his intended revolt. Edward, who had been informed not only of his intentions, but of his actual engagements, contented himself with setting spies round him to watch his conduct, and ordered all his motions to be strictly observed. Bruce was still busily employed in his endeavours, unconscious of being suspected, or even of having guards set upon his conduct; but he was taught to understand his danger, from a present sent him, by a young nobleman of his acquaintance, of a pair of gilt spurs and a purse of gold. This he considered as a warning to make his escape; which he did by ordering his horses to be shod with their shoes turned backwards, to prevent his being tracked in the snow, which had then fallen.

[1306.] His dispatch was then considered as very great; having travelled from London to Lochmaben, which is near four hundred miles, in seven days. Comyn, who had in the beginning concurred in his schemes, was privately known to have communicated the whole to Edward; and Bruce resolved, in the first place, to take vengeance upon him for his perfidy. Hearing that he was then at Dumfries, he went thither, and, meeting him in the cloisters of a monastery belonging to the Grey Friars, reproached him in severe

terms with his treachery; and, drawing his sword, instantly plunged it in his breast. Sir Thomas Kirkpatrick, one of Bruce's friends, asking him soon after if the traitor was slain, and Bruce answering that he believed so, "What!" replied the other, "only belief? I will secure him;" and, while Comyn was receiving absolution at the altar, he stabbed him to the heart. It is a disagreeable reflection, that actions begun in this manner should, nevertheless, terminate in success.

Bruce had by this action not only rendered himself the object of Edward's resentment, but involved all his party in the same guilt. They had now no resource left but to confirm by desperate valour what they had begun in cruelty; and they soon expelled such of the English forces as had fixed themselves in the kingdom. Bruce was solemnly crowned king by the bishop of St. Andrew's, in the abbey of Scone; and numbers flocked to his standard, resolved to confirm his pretensions. Thus, after twice conquering the kingdom, and as often pardoning the delinquents; after having spread his victories in every quarter of the country, and received the most humble submissions, the old king saw that his whole work was to begin afresh, and that nothing but the final destruction of the inhabitants could give him assurance of tranquillity. But no difficulties could repress the ardent spirit of this monarch, who, though now verging towards his decline, yet resolved to strike the parting blow, and to make the Scots once more tremble at his appearance. He vowed revenge against the whole nation; and averred, that nothing but reducing

them to the completest bondage could satisfy his resentment. He summoned his prelates, nobility, and all who held by knight's service, to meet him at Carlisle, which was appointed as the general rendezvous; and in the mean time he detached a body of forces before him into Scotland, under the command of Aymar de Valence, who began the threatened infliction by a complete victory over Bruce, near Methuen, in Perthshire. That warlike commander fought with great obstinacy; he was thrice dismounted from his horse in the action, and as often recovered: but at last, he was obliged to fly, and take shelter, with a few followers, in the Western Isles. The earl of Athol, sir Simon Fraser, and sir Christopher Seton, who had been taken prisoners, were executed as traitors on the spot. Immediately after this dreadful blow, the resentful king himself appeared in person, entering Scotland with his army divided into two parts, and expecting to find, in the opposition of the people, a pretext for punishing them. But this brave prince, who was never cruel but from motives of policy, could not punish the poor submitting natives, who made no resistance. His anger was disappointed in their humiliation: and he was ashamed to exterminate those who only opposed patience to his indignation. It was chiefly upon the nobles of the country that the weight of his resentment fell. The sister of Bruce, and the countess of Buchan, were shut up in wooden cages, and hung over the battlements of a fortress; and his two brothers fell by the hands of the executioner. The obstinacy of this commander served

to inflame the king's resentment. He still continued to excite fresh commotions in the Highlands; and, though often overcome, persisted in seemingly fruitless opposition. Edward, therefore, at last resolved to give no quarter; and at the head of a great army entered Scotland, whence he had lately retreated, with a determination of extirpating the whole body of those insurgents who seemed so implacably averse to his government. Nothing lay before the refractory Scots, but prospects of the most speedy and terrible vengeance; while neither their valour nor their mountains were found to afford them any permanent protection. But Edward's death put an end to their apprehensions, and rescued their country from total subjection. He sickened and died near Carlisle of a dysentery; enjoining his son, with his last breath, to prosecute the enterprise, and never to desist till he had finally subdued the knigdom. He expired in the sixty-ninth year of his age and July 7,
the thirty-fifth of his reign, after having 1307.
added more to the solid interests of the kingdom than any of those who went before or have succeeded him, except Henry the Seventh. He was a promoter of the happiness of the people, and seldom attempted to exert any arbitrary stretch of power, but with a prospect of increasing the welfare of his subjects. He was of a very majestic appearance, tall in stature, of regular features, with keen piercing black eyes, and an aspect that commanded reverence and esteem. His constitution was robust, his strength and dexterity unequalled, and his shape agreeable, except from the extreme length

and thinness of his legs, whence he had the appellation of Longshanks. He seemed to have united all those advantages which in that age might be considered as true glory. He gained renown by his piety in the Holy Land; he fixed the limits of justice at home; he confirmed the rights of the people; he was the most expert at martial exercises of any man in the kingdom; and was allowed to be a conqueror, by his success over the kingdom of Scotland. Succeeding times have, with great justice, questioned the merit of some of these claims; but none can deny him comparative excellence, if they look upon the majority of those princes who either went before or have succeeded. Edward, by his first wife Eleanor of Castile, had four sons, and ten daughters; of the last, five died young; of the former, Edward the Second alone, his heir and successor, survived him.

If we turn to the state of the people during his administration, we shall find that England acquired not only great power, but great happiness, under his protection. The barons, who might, during this period, he considered as a junto of petty tyrants, ready to cry out for liberty, which they alone were to share, were kept under; and their combinations were but feeble and ill supported. The monarch was in some measure absolute, though he was prudent enough not to exert his power. He was severe, indeed; and some people tax this severity as a stain upon his memory; but let it be remembered that he was the first who began to distribute indiscriminate justice. Before his time, the people who rose in insurrections were

punished in the most cruel manner by the sword or gibbet; while at the same time the nobility, who were really guilty, were treated with a degree of lenity which encouraged them to fresh insurrections. But what gave Edward's reign a true value with posterity, was the degree of power, which the people began to assume during this period. The king considered the clergy and barons in some measure as rivals; and, to weaken their force, he never attempted to control the slow but certain advances made by the people, which in time entirely destroyed the power of the one, and divided the authority of the other.

CHAPTER XIII.

EDWARD II. *surnamed of* CAERNARVON.

THE pleasure which the people generally feel at the accession of a new prince, effaces their sorrow for the deceased; the faults of the one are known and hated, while the other, from novelty, receives imputed merit. Much, therefore, was expected from the young prince; and all orders hastened to take the oath of allegiance to him. He was now in the twenty-third year of his age, of an agreeable figure, of a mild harmless disposition, and apparently addicted to few vices. But he soon gave symptoms of his unfitness to succeed so great a monarch as his father; he was rather fond of the enjoyment of his power than of securing it; and, lulled by the flattery of his courtiers, he thought he had done enough for glory when he had accepted the crown. Instead, therefore, of prosecuting the war against Scotland, according to the injunctions he had received from his dying father, he took no steps to check the progress of Bruce; his march into that country being rather a procession of pageantry than a warlike expedition. Bruce, no longer dreading a great conqueror in the field, boldly issued from his retreats, and even obtained a considerable advantage over Aymar de Valence, who commanded the English forces. Young Ed-

ward looked tamely on, and, instead of repressing the enemy, endeavoured to come to an accommodation. The English barons, who had been kept under during the preceding reign, now saw that the sceptre was fallen into such feeble hands, that they might re-assert their former independency with impunity.

To confirm the inauspicious conjectures that were already formed of this reign, Edward recalled one of his favourites, who had been banished during his father's reign, being accused of corrupting the prince's morals. The name of this much-loved youth was Peter Gaveston, the son of a Gascon knight, who had been employed in the service of the late king. This young man soon insinuated himself into the affections of the prince, and, in fact, was adorned with every accomplishment of person and mind that was capable of creating affection; but he was utterly destitute of those qualities of heart and understanding that serve to procure esteem. He was beautiful, witty, brave, and active; but then he was vicious, effeminate, debauched, and trifling. These were qualities entirely adapted to the taste of the young monarch, and such as he could not think of living without. He therefore took Gaveston into his particular intimacy, and seemed to think no rewards equal to his deserts. Even before his arrival at court from exile, he endowed him with the whole earldom of Cornwall, which had lately fallen to the crown. He married him soon after to his own niece, and granted him a sum of two and thirty thousand pounds, which the late king had reserved for the

maintenance of one hundred and forty knights, who had undertaken to carry his heart to Jerusalem.

These accumulated favours did not fail to excite the jealousies and indignation of the barons; and Gaveston was no way solicitous to soften their resentment. Intoxicated with his power, he became haughty and overbearing. He treated the English nobility, from whom it is probable he received marks of contempt, with scorn and derision. Whenever there was to be a display of pomp or magnificence, he was sure to eclipse all others; and he not only mortified his rivals by his superior splendour, but by his superior insolence.

The barons were soon after still more provoked to see this presumptuous favourite appointed guardian of the realm, during a journey which [1308.] the king was obliged to make to Paris to espouse the princess Isabella, to whom he had been long since betrothed. They were not remiss, therefore, upon the arrival of this princess, who was imperious and intriguing, to make her of their party, and to direct her animosity against Gaveston; which, to do him justice, he took little care to avoid. A conspiracy was soon formed against him, at the head of which, queen Isabella, and the earl of Lancaster, a nobleman of great power, were associated. They bound themselves by oath to expel Gaveston, and began to throw off all reverence for the royal authority, which they saw wholly in the possession of this overgrown favourite. At length, the king found himself obliged to submit to their united clamour; and he sent Gaveston out of the kingdom, by appointing him lord-lieutenant of Ireland. But

this compliance was of short duration: the weak monarch, long habituated to his favourite, could not live without him; and having obtained the pope's consent for the release of Gaveston from the obligation of an oath which he had taken, never to return to England, he recalled the obnoxious minion, and even went down to Chester to receive him on his first landing from Ireland. [1203.] A parliament was soon after assembled, where the king had influence sufficient to have his late conduct approved; and this served only to increase his ridiculous affection, and to render Gaveston still more odious. This infatuated creature himself, forgetting his past misfortunes, and unmindful of future danger, resumed his former ostentation and insolence, and made himself every day some new enemy.

It was easy to perceive that a combination of the nobles, while the queen secretly assisted their designs, would be too powerful against the efforts of a weak king and a vain favourite. They were resolved upon the fall of Gaveston, even though Edward himself should be involved in the same ruin. They soon therefore assembled in a tumultuary parliament, contrary to the king's express command, attended with a numerous retinue of armed followers, and began their first usurpation by giving laws to the king. They compelled him March 16, 1310. to sign a commission, by which the whole authority of government was to be delegated to twelve persons, to be chosen by themselves. These were to have the government of the kingdom, and the regulation of the king's household. They were

to enact ordinances for the good of the state, and the honour of the king; and their commissions were to continue for a year and a half. Many of their ordinances were accordingly put in force; and some of them appeared for the advantage of the nation; such as the requiring that the sheriffs should be men of property; the prohibiting the adulteration of the coin; the excluding foreigners from farming the revenues; and the revoking all the late exorbitant grants of the crown. All these the king, who saw himself entirely stripped of his power, could very patiently submit to; but when he learned that Gaveston was to be banished for ever from his dominions, he no longer was master of his temper; but removing to York, where he was at a small distance from the immediate terror of the confederated power, he instantly invited Gaveston back from Flanders, whither the barons had banished him; and declaring his punishment and sentence to be illegal, he openly reinstated him in all his former splendours.

[1311.]

[1312.] This was sufficient to spread an alarm over the whole kingdom; the great barons flew to arms; the earl of Lancaster put himself at the head of this irresistible confederacy; Guy, earl of Warwick, entered into it with fury; the earl of Hereford, the earl of Pembroke, and earl Warrenne, embraced the same cause;—whilst the archbishop of Canterbury brought over the majority of the ecclesiastics, and consequently of the people. The unhappy Edward, instead of attempting to make resistance, sought only for safety: ever happy in the company of his favourite, he embarked at Tin-

mouth, and sailed with him to the castle of Scarborough, where he left Gaveston as in a place of safety; and then went back to York himself, either to raise an army to oppose his enemies, or, by his presence, to allay their animosity. In the mean time Gaveston was besieged in Scarborough by the earl of Pembroke; and had the garrison been sufficiently supplied with provisions, that place would have been impregnable. But Gaveston, sensible of the bad condition of the garrison, took the earliest opportunity to offer terms of capitulation. He stipulated, that he should remain in Pembroke's hands as a prisoner for two months; and that endeavours should be used, in the mean time, for a general accommodation. But Pembroke had no intention that he should escape so easily; he ordered him to be conducted to the castle of Deddington, near Banbury, where, on pretence of other business, he left him with a feeble guard; which the earl of Warwick having notice of, he attacked the castle in which the unfortunate Gaveston was confined, and quickly made himself master of his person. The earls of Lancaster, Hereford, and Arundel, were soon apprised of Warwick's success, and informed that their common enemy was now in custody at Warwick castle. Thither, therefore, they hastened with the utmost expedition, to hold a consultation upon the fate of their prisoner. This was of no long continuance; they unanimously resolved to put him to death, as an enemy to the kingdom, and gave him no time to prepare for his execution. They instantly had him conveyed to a place called Blacklow-hill, where a Welch execu-

tioner, provided for that purpose, severed the head from the body. There appeared a deeper spirit of cruelty now entering the nation than had been known in times of barbarism and ignorance. It is probable, that the mutual slaughters committed by the Christians and Saracens upon each other, in the crusades, made the people familiar with blood, and taught Christians to butcher each other, with the same alacrity with which they were seen to destroy infidels, to whom they seldom gave any quarter.

The king at first seemed to feel all the resentment which so sensible an injury could produce; but, equally weak in his attachment and his revenge, he was soon appeased, and granted the perpetrators a free pardon, upon their making a show of submission and repentance. [1313.] An apparent tranquillity was once more established among the contending parties; and that resentment which they had exercised upon each other, was now converted against the Scots, who were considered as the common enemy. A war had been declared some time before with this nation, in order to recover that authority over them which had been established in the former reign, and a truce was soon after concluded; but, the terms of it being ill observed on both sides, animosities were kindled afresh, and the whole military force of England was called out by the king, together with very large reinforcements, as well from the continent as other parts of the English dominions. Edward's army amounted to a hundred thousand men; while Bruce, king of Scotland, could bring but a body of

thirty thousand to oppose him. Both armies met at a place called Bannockburn, in the [1314.] kingdom of Scotland, within two miles of Stirling; the one confident in numbers, the other relying wholly on its advantageous position. Bruce had a hill on his right flank, and a morass on his left; with a rivulet in front, on the banks of which he had caused several deep pits to be dug, with sharp stakes driven into them, and the whole carefully concealed from the view of the enemy. The onset was made by the English; and a very furious engagement ensued between the cavalry on both sides. The fortune and intrepidity of Bruce gave the first turn to the day. He engaged in single combat with Henry de Bohun, a gentleman of the family of Hereford; and at one stroke clove his skull with his battle-axe to the chin. So favourable a beginning was only interrupted by the night; for, the battle being renewed at the dawn of the ensuing day, the English cavalry once more attempted to attack the Scotish army, but unexpectedly found themselves entangled among those pits which Bruce had previously made to receive them. The earl of Gloucester, the king's nephew, was overthrown and slain: this served to intimidate the whole English army; and they were soon still more alarmed by the appearance of a fresh army, as they supposed it to be, that was preparing, from a neighbouring height, to fall upon them in the rear. This was only composed of waggoners and attendants upon the Scotish camp, who had been supplied by the king with standards, and ordered to make as formidable an appearance as they could. The stra-

tagem took effect: the English, intimidated by their losses, and distracted by their fears, began to fly on all sides; and, throwing away their arms, were pursued with great slaughter as far as Berwick.

Edward himself narrowly escaped by flight to Dunbar, where he was received by the earl of Marche, and thence conveyed in safety by sea to Berwick. This battle was decisive in favour of the Scots. It secured the independence of the crown of that kingdom; and such was the influence of so great a defeat upon the minds of the English, that for some years after no superiority of numbers could induce them to take the field against their formidable adversaries.

Want of success is ever attended with want of authority. The king, having not only suffered a defeat from the Scots, but also having been weakened by several insurrections among the Welch and Irish, found his greatest afflictions still remaining in the turbulence and insolence of his subjects at home. The nobility, ever factious, now took the advantage of his feeble situation to depress his power, and re-establish their own. The earl of Lancaster, and those of his party, no sooner saw the unfortunate monarch return with disgrace, than they renewed their demands, and were reinstated in their former power of governing the kingdom. It was declared, that all offices should be filled from time to time by the votes of parliament; which being influenced by the great barons, these effectually took all government into their own hands. Thus, from every fresh calamity which the state suffered, the barons acquired new power;

and their aims were not so much to repress the enemies of their country, as to foment new animosities, and strengthen every foreign confederacy.

A confirmed opposition generally produces an opposite combination. The king, finding himself thus steadily counteracted by all his subjects, had no resource but in another favourite, on whom he reposed all confidence, and from whose connexions he hoped for assistance. The name of this new favourite was Hugh le Despenser, a young man of a noble English family, of some merit, and very engaging accomplishments. His father was a person of a much more estimable character than the son; he was venerable from his years, and respected through life for his wisdom, his valour, and his integrity. But these excellent qualities were all diminished and vilified, from the moment he and his son began to share the king's favour. The turbulent barons, and Lancaster at their head, regarded them as rivals, and taught the people to despise those accomplishments that only served to eclipse their own. The king, equally weak and unjust in his attachments, instead of profiting by the wisdom of his favourites, endeavoured to strengthen himself by their power. For this purpose he married the young Spenser to his niece; settled upon him some very large possessions in the marches of Wales; and even dispossessed some lords unjustly of their estates, in order to accumulate them upon his favourite. This was a pretext for which the king's enemies had been long seeking: the earls of Lancaster and Hereford flew to arms; and the lords Audley and Amori, who had [1321.]

been dispossessed, joined them with all their forces. Their first measure was to require the king to dismiss or confine his favourite, the young Spenser; menacing him, in case of a refusal, with a determination to obtain their wishes by force. This request was scarcely urged, when they began to show their resolution to have redress, by pillaging and destroying the lands of young Spenser, and burning his houses. The estates of the father soon after shared the same fate; and the insurgents, having thus satiated themselves with the plunder of this most opulent family, marched to London, to inflict with their own hands that punishment which had been denied to their remonstrances. Finding a free entrance into the city, they so intimidated the parliament, that a sentence was procured of perpetual exile against the two Spensers, and a forfeiture of their fortune and estates. But an act of this kind, extorted by violence, was not likely to bind the king any longer than necessity compelled him. Some time after, having assembled a small army to punish one of those barons, who had offered an indignity to the queen, he thought it a convenient opportunity to take revenge on all his enemies at once, and to recall the two Spensers, whose company he so ardently desired. In this manner the civil war was re-kindled, and the country once more involved in all the horrors of slaughter and devastation.

The king had now gotten the start of his adversaries, and hastened by forced marches towards the borders of Wales, where the enemy's chief power lay. Lancaster, however, was not slow in making

head against him; having summoned all his vassals and retainers, and being joined by the earl of Hereford. [1322.] Still further to strengthen his party, he formed an alliance with the king of Scotland, with whom he had long been privately connected. But his diligence on this occasion proved ineffectual: the king, at the head of thirty thousand men, pressed him so closely, that he had not time to collect his forces; and, flying from one place to another, he was at last stopped in his way towards Scotland by sir Andrew Harcla, who repulsed his forces in a skirmish, in which the earl of Hereford was slain, and Lancaster himself taken prisoner. As he had formerly shown little mercy to Gaveston, there was very little extended to him upon this occasion. He was condemned by the court martial; led, mounted on a lean horse, to an eminence near Pontefract, in circumstances of the greatest indignity; and beheaded by a Londoner. The people, with whom he had once been a favourite, seemed to have quite forsaken him in his disgrace; they reviled him, as he was led to execution, with every kind of reproach; and even his own vassals seemed eager to remove suspicion, by their being foremost to insult his distress. About eighteen more of the principal insurgents were afterwards condemned and executed in a more legal manner, while others found safety by escaping to the continent.

A rebellion thus crushed, served only to increase the pride and rapacity of young Spenser; most of the forfeitures were seized for his use; and in his promptitude to punish the delinquents, he was

guilty of many acts of rapine and injustice. He himself laid the train for his own future misfortunes, and an occasion soon offered for putting it into effect against him. The king of France, taking the advantage of Edward's weakness, resolved to confiscate all his foreign dominions. After a fruitless embassy from Edward, to dissuade that monarch from his purpose, the queen of England herself desired permission to go over to the court of France, [1325.] to endeavour to avert the storm. The French king, though he gave her the kindest reception, was resolved to listen to no accommodation, unless Edward in person should appear, and do him homage for the dominions he held under him. This was reckoned a very dangerous step, and what the king of England could not think of complying with, nor what his favourite Spenser was willing to permit. In this exigence, the queen started a new expedient, which seemed calculated to remove all difficulties. It was, that Edward should resign the dominion of Guienne to his son, now thirteen years of age; and that the young prince should go to Paris, to pay that homage which had been required of the father. With this proposal all parties agreed; young Edward was sent to Paris; and the queen, a haughty and ambitious woman, having thus gotten her son in her power, resolved to detain him till her own aims were complied with. Of these objects one was the expulsion of the Spensers; against whom she had conceived a violent hatred, from their great influence over the king.

In consequence of this resolution she protracted the negotiation for some time; and being at last

required by the king to return, she replied, that she would never again appear in England till Spenser should be removed from the royal presence, and banished from the kingdom. By this reply, she gained two very considerable advantages; she became popular in England, where Spenser was universally disliked; and she had the pleasure of enjoying the company of a young nobleman, whose name was Mortimer, upon whom she had lately placed her affections. This youth had, in some former insurrection, been condemned for high treason, but had the sentence commuted into perpetual imprisonment in the Tower. Thence, however, he had the good fortune to escape into France, and soon became distinguished among his party for his violent animosity to Spenser. The graces of his person and address, but particularly his dislike to the favourite, rendered him very acceptable to the queen, so that, from being a partisan, he became a lover, and was indulged with all the familiarities that her criminal passion could confer. The queen's court now, therefore, became a sanctuary for all the malcontents who were banished from their own country, or who chose to come over. A correspondence was secretly carried on with the discontented at home; and nothing now was aimed at but to destroy the favourites, and dethrone the king.

To second the queen's efforts, many of [1326.] the principal nobles prepared their vassals, and loudly declared against the favourite. The king's brother, the earl of Kent, was led to engage among the rest; the earl of Norfolk was prevailed

upon to enter secretly into the conspiracy; the earl of Leicester, heir to the earl of Lancaster, was from principle attached to the cause: the archbishop of Canterbury expressed his approbation of the queen's measures; and the minds of the people were inflamed by all those arts which the designing practise upon the weak and ignorant. While the English were thus disposed to rebel, the queen prepared for her expedition; and, accompanied by three thousand men at arms, passed over from Dordrecht to the British coast, and landed without opposition in Suffolk. She no sooner appeared than there seemed a general revolt in her favour; three prelates, the bishops of Ely, Lincoln, and Hereford, brought her all their vassals; and Robert de Watteville, who had been sent to oppose her progress, deserted to her with all his forces.

In this exigence the unfortunate Edward vainly attempted to collect his friends, and bring the malcontents to their duty; he was obliged to leave the capital to the resentment of the prevailing party; and the populace, immediately upon his desertion, flew out into those excesses which are the consequence of brutality unrestrained by fear. They seized Walter Stapleton, bishop of Exeter, as he was passing through the city, beheaded him without any form of trial, and threw his body into the Thames. They also seized upon the Tower, and agreed to show no mercy to any who should oppose their attempts. In the mean time, the king found that the spirit of disloyalty was not confined to the capital, but was diffused over the whole kingdom. He had placed some dependence upon the garrison

which was stationed in the castle of Bristol, under the command of the elder Spenser; but they mutinied against their governor, and that unfortunate favourite was delivered up, and condemned by the tumultuous barons to the most ignominious death. He was hanged on a gibbet in his armour, his body was cut to pieces and thrown to the dogs, and his head was sent to Winchester, where it was set on a pole, and exposed to the insults of the populace. Thus died the elder Spenser, in his ninetieth year, whose character even the malevolence of party could not tarnish. He had passed a youth of tranquillity and reputation; but his fond compliance with his son's ambition at length involved his age in ruin, though not disgrace.

Young Spenser, the unhappy son, did not long survive the father; he was taken with some others who had followed the fortunes of the wretched king, in an obscure convent in Wales, and the merciless victors resolved to glut their revenge in adding insult to cruelty. The queen had not patience to wait the formality of a trial; but ordered him immediately to be led forth before the insulting populace, and seemed to take a savage pleasure in feasting her eyes with his distresses. The gibbet erected for his execution was fifty feet high; his head was sent to London, where the citizens received it in brutal triumph, and fixed it on the bridge. Several other lords also shared his fate; all deserving pity indeed, had they not themselves formerly justified the present inhumanity, by setting a cruel example.

In the mean time the king, who hoped to find

refuge in Wales, was quickly discovered, and closely pursued by his triumphant enemies. Finding no hopes of succour in that part of the country, he took shipping for Ireland; but even there his wretched fortune seemed willing to persecute him; he was driven back by contrary winds, and delivered up to his adversaries, who expressed their satisfaction in the grossness of their treatment. He was conducted to the capital, amidst the insults and reproaches of the people, and
[1327.] confined in the Tower. A charge was soon after exhibited, in which no other crimes but his incapacity to govern, his indolence, his love of pleasure, and his being swayed by evil counsellors, were objected against him. His deposition was quickly voted by parliament; a pension was assigned to him for his support; his son Edward, a youth of fourteen, was fixed upon to succeed him, and the queen was appointed regent during the minority.

The deposed monarch but a short time survived his misfortunes; he was sent from prison to prison, a wretched outcast, and the sport of his inhuman keepers. He had been at first consigned to the custody of the earl of Leicester; but this nobleman showing some marks of respect and pity, he was taken out of his hands, and delivered over to lord Berkeley, Maltravers, and Gournay, who were intrusted with the charge of guarding him, each for a month. Whatever his treatment from lord Berkeley might have been, the other two seemed resolved that he should enjoy none of the comforts of life while in their custody. They

practised every kind of indignity upon him, as if their design had been to accelerate his death by the bitterness of his sufferings. Among other acts of brutal oppression, it is said that they shaved him for sport in the open fields, using water from a neighbouring ditch. The genius of the people must have been greatly debased, or they would never have permitted such indecencies to be practised on a monarch, whose greatest fault was the violence of his friendships. He is said to have borne his former indignities with patience, but all fortitude forsook him upon this occasion; he looked upon his merciless insulters with an air of fallen majesty, and, bursting into tears, exclaimed, that the time might come when he should be more decently attended. This, however, was but a vain expectation. As his persecutors saw that his death might not arrive, even under every cruelty, till a revolution had been made in his favour, they resolved to rid themselves of their fears by destroying him at once. Accordingly, his two keepers, Gournay and Maltravers, repaired to Berkeley castle, where Edward was then confined; and having concerted a method of putting him to death without any external signs of violence, they threw him on a bed, holding him down by a table, which they placed over him. They then ran a horn pipe up his body, through which they conveyed a red-hot iron; and thus burned his bowels without disfiguring his body. By this cruel artifice, they expected to have their crime concealed; but his horrid shrieks, which were heard at a distance from the castle, soon

gave a suspicion of the murder; and the whole was soon after divulged, by the confession of one of the accomplices. Misfortunes like his must ever create pity; and a punishment so disproportionate to the sufferer's guilt must wipe away even many of those faults which were justly imputable to this prince. He left two sons and two daughters: Edward III. was his eldest son and successor; John died young; Jane was afterwards married to David Bruce, king of Scotland; and Eleanor was the wife of Reginald, count of Gueldres.

CHAPTER XIV.

EDWARD III.

THE parliament by which young Edward was raised to the throne, during the life of his father, appointed twelve persons as his privy council, to direct the operations of government. Mortimer, the queen's paramour, who might naturally be set down as one of the members, artfully excluded himself, under a pretended show of moderation; but at the same time he secretly influenced all the measures that came under their deliberation. He caused the greatest part of the royal revenues to be settled on the queen-dowager, and seldom took the trouble to consult the ministers of government in any public undertaking. The king himself was so besieged by the favourite's creatures, that no access could be procured to him, and the whole sovereign authority was shared between Mortimer and the queen, who took no care to conceal her criminal attachment.

A government so constituted could not be of long continuance; and the slightest shock was sufficient to overturn that power which was founded neither in strength nor in virtue. An irruption of the Scots gave the first blow to Mortimer's credit, and young Edward's own abilities contributed to its ruin. The Scots, who had no connexion with

either party, were resolved to take advantage of the feeble state of the nation; and, without regarding the truce that subsisted between the two kingdoms, attempted to surprise the castle of Norham. This commencement of hostilities they soon after seconded by a formidable invasion on the northern counties, with an army of twenty thousand men. Edward, even at this early age, discovered that martial disposition for which he was afterwards so famous. He resolved to intercept them in their retreat; and began his march in the middle of July, at the head of an army of threescore thousand men; but after undergoing incredible fatigues, in pursuing them through woods and morasses, he was unable to perceive any signs of an enemy, except from the ravages they had made, and the smoking ruins of villages which they had set on fire. In this disappointment, he had no other resource but to offer a reward to any who should discover the place where the Scots were posted. This the enemy understanding, sent him word that they were ready to meet him and give him battle. However, they had taken so advantageous a situation, on the opposite banks of the river Were, that the king found it impracticable to attack them; and no threats could bring them to a battle upon equal terms.

It was in this situation that the first breach was discovered between the king and Mortimer. The young monarch, all ardour to engage, resolved that night, at all hazards, not to allow the ravagers to escape with impunity; but Mortimer opposed his influence to the valour of the king, and pre-

vented an engagement, which might be attended with the most destructive consequences to his authority, whether he won or lost the day. Shortly after, the Scots, under the command of Douglas, made an irruption into the English camp by night, and arrived at the very tent in which the king was sleeping. But the young monarch happening to wake in the critical moment, made a valiant defence against the enemy; his chamberlain and chaplain died fighting by his side; and he thus had time given him to escape in the dark. The Scots being frustrated in their design upon the king, were contented to decamp for their own country, leaving their tents standing, without any person behind them, except six English prisoners, whose legs had been broken to prevent their carrying intelligence to their countrymen. The escape of the Scots was as disagreeable a circumstance to the English army, as the valour of the young king was applauded and admired. The failure on one part was entirely ascribed to the queen's favourite; and the success on the other to the king's own intrepidity. The people began to wish for a removal of that authority which stood between them and the monarch; and spared no pains to aggravate the faults of their governors, or to extol the rising merit of their young sovereign.

Mortimer now found himself in a very precarious situation, and was resolved, on any terms, to procure a peace with Scotland, in order to fix his power more firmly at home. A treaty was accordingly concluded between the two [1328.] nations, in which the English renounced all title

to sovereignty over the sister kingdom; and the Scots, in return, agreed to pay thirty thousand marks as a compensation. The next step that Mortimer thought necessary for his security, was, to seize the earl of Kent, brother to the late king, a harmless and well-meaning person, who, under a persuasion that his brother was still alive, and concealed in some secret prison, entered into a design of restoring him to liberty, and reinstating him in his former power. Him therefore Mortimer resolved to destroy; and, summoning him before parliament, had him accused, con- [1330.] demned, and executed, even before the young king had time to interpose in his favour. In proportion as Mortimer thus got rid of his enemies, he was careful to enrich himself with their spoils. The estate of the unfortunate earl was seized upon for the use of the favourite's youngest son: the immense fortunes of the Spensers were in like manner converted to his use. Thus his power became invidious, and his corrupt morals made it still more formidable.

It was in this posture of affairs that Edward resolved to shake off an authority which was odious to the nation, and particularly restrictive upon him. But such was the power of the favourite, that it required as much precaution to overturn the usurper as to establish the throne. The queen and Mortimer had for some time chosen the castle of Nottingham for the place of their residence; it was strictly guarded; the gates were locked every evening, and the keys carried to the queen. It was therefore agreed between

the king and some of his barons, who secretly entered into his designs, to seize upon them in this fortress; and for that purpose, sir William Eland, the governor, was induced to admit them by a subterraneous passage, which had been formerly contrived for an outlet, but was now hidden with rubbish, and known only to one or two. It was by this, that the noblemen in the king's interests entered the castle in the night; and Mortimer, without having it in his power to make any resistance, was seized in an apartment adjoining that of the queen. It was in vain that she endeavoured to protect him; in vain she entreated them to spare her "gentle Mortimer;" the barons, deaf to her entreaties, denied her that pity which she had so often refused to others. Her paramour was condemned by the parliament, which was then sitting, without being permitted to make his defence, or even examining a witness against him. He was hanged on a gibbet at a place called Elmes, about a mile from London, where his body was left hanging for two days after. A similar sentence was passed against some of his adherents, particularly Gournay and Maltravers, the murderers of the late king; but these had time to elude punishment, by escaping to the continent. The queen, who was certainly the most culpable, was shielded by the dignity of her situation; she was only deprived of all share of power, and confined for life to the castle of Risings, with a pension of three thousand pounds a year. From this confinement she was never after set free; and though the king annually paid her a visit of decent

ceremony, she found herself abandoned to universal contempt and detestation; and continued, for above twenty-five years after, a miserable monument of blasted ambition.

Edward, being thus freed from the control of usurped authority, resolved to become popular, by an expedient which seldom failed to gain the affections of the English. He knew that a conquering monarch was the fittest to please a warlike people. The weakness of the Scotish government, which was at that time under a minority, gave him a favourable opportunity of renewing hostilities; and the turbulent spirit of the nobles of that country contributed still more to promote his aims. A new pretender also started up to that throne, namely Edward Baliol, whose father John had been crowned king of Scotland; and Edward resolved to assist him in his pretensions.

[1332.] He therefore gave him permission to levy forces in England, in addition to those which he had brought from the continent; and, with not above three thousand adventurers thus fortuitously united, Baliol gained a considerable victory over his countrymen, in which twelve thousand of their men were slain. This victory, which was followed by some others, so intimidated the Scots, that their armies dispersed, and the kingdom seemed as if subdued by a handful of men. Baliol, by one of those unexpected turns of fortune, common enough in barbarous times, was crowned king at Scone; and every nobleman, who was most exposed to danger, submitted to his authority. But he did not long enjoy his supe-

riority; by another turn equally sudden, he was attacked and defeated by sir Archibald Douglas, and obliged to take refuge in England, in a miserable condition.

An attempt, thus unsuccessfully made by Baliol, only served to inflame the ardour of Edward, who very joyfully accepted that offer of homage and superiority, which it was Baliol's present interest to make. He therefore prepared with all his force, to reinstate the deposed king of Scotland, in a government which would ever after be subordinate to his own. He accordingly prevailed upon his parliament to give him a supply, which they reluctantly did; and, with a well-disciplined army, he laid siege to Berwick, which capitulated after a vigorous defence. It was in attempting to relieve this city that a general engagement ensued between the Scots and the English. It was fought at Halidown-hill, to the north of Berwick. The fortune of Edward prevailed. Douglas, the Scotish general, was slain, and soon after the whole army put to the rout. This victory was in a great measure obtained by the expertness of the English archers, who now began to be famous over Europe for their peculiar skill. All the Scotish nobles of great distinction were either slain or taken prisoners; near thirty thousand of their men are represented as having fallen in the action, while the loss of the English, it is said, only amounted to about fifteen men; an inequality absolutely incredible. This important victory decided the fate of Scotland; Baliol, with very little trouble, made himself master of the country; and

July 19, 1333.

Edward returned in triumph to England, having previously secured many of the principal towns in Scotland, which were declared to be annexed to the English monarchy. These victories, however, were rather splendid than serviceable; the Scots seemed about this time to have conceived an insurmountable aversion to the English government; and no sooner were Edward's forces withdrawn, than they revolted against Baliol, and well nigh expelled him the kingdom. Edward's appearance a second time served to bring them to sub-
[1335.] jection; but they quickly renewed their animosities upon his retiring. It was in vain, therefore, that he employed all the arts of persuasion, and all the terrors of war, to induce them to submission; they persevered in their reluctance to obey: and they were daily kept in hopes, by promises of succour from France.

This kingdom, which had for a long time discontinued its animosities against England, was now an object of Edward's jealousy and ambition. A new scene began to be opened in France, which operated for more than a century in subjecting that country to all the miseries of war, till Europe at last began to doubt, whether it was annexed to England by right of arms, or of succession. France, at that period, was neither the extensive nor the powerful kingdom we see it at this day. Many great provinces have been added to it since that period, particularly Dauphiné, Provence, and Franche Comté; and the government was still more enfeebled by those neighbouring princes who were pretended subjects to the king, but, in

reality, formidable rivals of his power. At the time we are speaking of, that kingdom was particularly unfortunate; and the king shared in the general calamity. The three sons of Philip the Fair, in full parliament, accused their wives of adultery; and in consequence of this accusation they were condemned, and imprisoned for life. Lewis Hutin, the successor to the crown of France, caused his wife to be strangled, and her lovers to be flayed alive. After his death, as he left only a daughter, his next brother, Philip the Tall, assumed the crown, in prejudice of the daughter; and vindicated his title by the Salic law, which laid it down, that no female should succeed to the crown. This law, however, was not universally acknowledged, nor sufficiently confirmed by precedents to procure an easy submission. They had hitherto inquired but slightly in France, whether a female could succeed to the kingdom; and as laws are only made to regulate what may happen by what has happened already, there were no facts upon which to ground the opinions on either side of the question. There were, in reality, precedents to countenance both claims, and thus to keep mankind in suspense. The parliament in France had often adjudged the succession to women, as Artois was formerly given to a female, in prejudice of the male heir. The succession of Champagne had been, on some occasions, given to the daughters; while, on others, they were judged unqualified to succeed. We thus see that right changed with power; and justice, in such a

case, was unknown, or disregarded. In the present instance, the younger brother of the late king, Charles the Fair, jealous of his elder brother's fortune, opposed his pretensions, and asserted that the late king's daughter was rightful heir to his crown. The cause, thus warmly contested between the two brothers, was at last carried before the parliament of France; and they decided upon the Salic law, in favour of Philip. This monarch enjoyed the crown but a short time; and, dying, left only daughters to succeed him. Charles, therefore, without a male opponent, seized the crown, and enjoyed it for some time; but he also dying, left his wife pregnant. As there was now no apparent heir, the regency was contested by two persons, who laid their claims upon this occasion. Edward the Third urged his pretensions, as being by his mother Isabella (who was daughter to Philip the Fair, and sister to the three last kings of France) rightful heir to the crown. Philip de Valois, on the other hand, put himself in actual possession of the government, as being next heir by the male succession. He was, for this reason, constituted regent of France; and the queen-dowager being unfortunately, some time after, brought to bed of a daughter, he was unanimously elected king. He was crowned amidst the universal congratulations of his subjects; received the appellation of Philip the Fortunate; and to this he added those qualities which might merit good fortune, namely, justice and virtue. Among other instances of his felicity, he might reckon that

of the homage paid him by Edward, his rival, which he came to offer at Amiens. However, as strength generally inspires ambition, this homage was soon followed by a war; and Edward disputed that crown, of which he had just before declared himself a vassal.

A brewer of Ghent was one of those who gave the greatest assistance to Edward in this war, and determined him to assume the title of king of France. This citizen's name was James Arteveld, a man grown too powerful for a subject; and one of those whom, according to Machiavel, kings ought to flatter or destroy. This citizen had, for some time, governed his countrymen with a more absolute sway than had ever been assumed by any of their lawful sovereigns. He placed and displaced magistrates at his pleasure. He was accompanied by a guard, who, on the least signal from him, instantly assassinated any man who had the misfortune to fall under his displeasure. With the assistance of this man, therefore, Edward resolved to undertake the conquest of France. He first however, in a formal manner, consulted his parliament on the propriety of the undertaking; obtained their approbation; received a proper supply of wool, which he intended to barter with the Flemings; and being attended with a body of English forces, and several of the nobility, he sailed over to Flanders, big with his intended conquests. [1338.]

Edward's first step was to assert his claim to the French crown; to assume the title of king of the country, and brand Philip, his rival, with the title

[1339.] of usurper. Philip, on the other hand, made vigorous preparations to oppose him; he even challenged the invader to try their fortune in single combat, upon equal terms, in some appointed plain. Edward accepted the challenge; for in every action this prince affected the hero: but some obstacles intervening, the war was prosecuted in the usual manner, both sides taking every advantage when it happened to offer.

[1340.] The first great advantage gained by the English was in a naval engagement on the coast of Flanders, in which the French lost two hundred and thirty ships, and had twenty thousand of their seamen, and two of their admirals, slain. None of Philip's courtiers, it is said, dared to inform him of the event, till his jester gave him a hint, by which he discovered the loss he had sustained. This victory, together with some successful operations that soon after followed, brought on a truce, which neither side seemed willing to break, till the ambition of Edward was once more excited by the invitation of the count de Montfort, who had possessed himself of the province of Bretagne, and applied to Edward to second his claims. An offer of this kind entirely coincided with Edward's most sanguine desires. He immediately saw the advantages arising from such a proposal. He was happy in the promised assistance of Montfort, an active and valiant prince, who was closely united to him by interest, and whose co-operation might open to him an entrance into the heart of France, while he could have no hopes from the side of Flanders, as he was obstructed by the numerous

fortifications which had been raised on that frontier. His flattering prospects were for a while damped by the imprisonment of Montfort; whose aims being discovered, he found himself besieged in the city of Nantes, and taken. But Jane [1341.] of Flanders, his wife, soon made up for the loss of her husband. This lady, who was one of the most extraordinary women of the age, courageously undertook to support the falling fortunes of her family. She assembled the inhabitants of Rennes where she then resided; and, carrying her infant son in her arms, deplored her misfortunes, and attempted to inspire the citizens with an affection for her cause. The inhabitants of Nantes instantly espoused her interests, and the other fortresses of Bretagne embraced the same resolution. The king of England was apprised of her efforts in his favour, and entreated to send her succours with all possible expedition to the town of Hennebonne, in which place she resolved to sustain the attacks of the enemy. She was not deceived in her opinion of the enemy's vigilance and activity. Charles de Blois, Montfort's competitor, anxious to make himself master of so important a fortress as Hennebonne, and still more to take the countess [1342.] prisoner, sat down before the place with a large army, and conducted the siege with indefatigable industry. The defence was no less vigorous; several sallies were made by the garrison, in which the countess herself was still the most active, and led on to the assault. Observing one day that the army of Charles had quitted the camp to join in a general storm, she sallied out by a postern at the

head of three hundred horse, set fire to the enemy's tents and baggage, put their sutlers and servants to the sword, and occasioned such an alarm, that the besiegers desisted from the assault, in order to cut off her communication from the town. Thus intercepted, she retired to Auray, where she continued for five or six days; then returning at the head of five hundred horse, she fought her way through one quarter of the French camp, and returned to her faithful citizens in triumph. But mere unsupported valour could not repel all the encroachments of an active and superior enemy. The besiegers had at length made several breaches in the walls; and it was apprehended that a general assault, which was hourly expected, would be fatal. A capitulation was therefore proposed, and a conference was already begun, when the countess, who had mounted on a high tower, and was looking towards the sea with great impatience, descried some ships at a distance. She immediately exclaimed that succours were arrived, and forbade any further capitulation. She was not disappointed in her wishes: the fleet she discerned carried a body of English gentlemen, with six thousand archers, whom Edward had prepared for the relief of Hennebonne, but who had been long detained by contrary winds. They entered the harbour, under the conduct of Sir Walter Manny, one of the most valiant commanders of his time. This relief served to keep up the declining spirits of the Bretons, until the time appointed by the late truce with Edward was expired, on which he was at liberty to renew the war in greater form,

He accordingly soon after landed at Morbihan, near Vannes, with an army of twelve thousand men; and being master of the field, where no enemy dared to appear against him, he endeavoured to give lustre to his arms by besieging some of the chief fortifications of the enemy. The vigour of his operations led to another truce; and this was soon followed by a fresh infraction. The truth is, neither side observed a truce longer than it coincided with their interests; and both had always sufficient art to throw the blame of perfidy from themselves. The earl of Derby was sent by Edward to defend the province of Guienne, with instructions also to take every possible advantage that circumstances might offer. At first his successes were rapid and brilliant; but as soon as the French king had time to prepare, he met with a very unexpected resistance; so that the English general was compelled to stand upon the defensive. One fortress after another was surrendered to the French; and nothing appeared but a total extinction of the power of England upon the continent. In this situation Edward resolved to give his personal aid to his distressed subjects and allies; and accordingly embarked at Southampton on board a fleet of near a thousand sail, of all dimensions. He carried with him, besides the chief nobility of England, his eldest son, the prince of Wales (afterwards surnamed the Black Prince), a youth of sixteen, remarkable both for understanding and valour above his age. His army consisted of four thousand men at arms, ten thousand archers, [1344.]

ten thousand Welch infantry, and six thousand Irish, all which he landed safely at La Hogue, a port in Normandy, which country he determined to make the seat of war.

The intelligence of Edward's landing, and the devastation caused by his troops, who dispersed themselves over the whole face of the country, soon diffused consternation through the French court. The rich city of Caen was taken and plundered by the English without mercy; the villages and towns, even up to Paris, shared the same fate; and the French had no other resource but by breaking down their bridges to attempt putting a stop to the invader's career. In the mean time, Philip was not idle in making preparations to repress the enemy. He had stationed one of his generals, Godemar de Faye, with an army on the opposite side of the river Somme, over which Edward was to pass; while he himself, at the head of a hundred thousand fighting men, advanced to give the English battle. Edward thus, in the midst of his victories, unexpectedly exposed to the danger of being enclosed and of starving in an enemy's country, published a reward to any that should bring him intelligence of a passage over the river Somme. This was discovered by a peasant of the country; and Edward had just time to get his whole army over the river, when Philip appeared in his rear.

As both armies had for some time been in sight of each other, nothing was so eagerly expected by both parties as a battle; and although the forces were extremely disproportioned, the English

amounting only to thirty thousand, the French to a hundred and twenty thousand, yet Edward resolved to indulge the impetuosity of his troops, and put all to the hazard of a battle. He accordingly chose his ground, with advantage, near the village of Crecy; and there determined to wait with tranquillity the shock of the enemy. He drew up his men on a gentle ascent, and divided them into three lines. The first was commanded by the young prince of Wales; the second was conducted by the earls of Northampton and Arundel; and the third, which was kept as a body of reserve, was headed by the king in person. As his small army was in danger of being surrounded, he threw up trenches on his flank, and placed all his baggage in a wood behind him, which he also secured by an entrenchment. Having thus made the proper dispositions, he and the prince of Wales received the sacrament with great devotion; and all his behaviour denoted the calm intrepidity of a man resolved on conquest or death. He rode from rank to rank with a serene countenance; bade his soldiers remember the honour of their country; and by his eloquence animated the whole army to a degree of enthusiastic expectation. It is said also by some, that he first made use of artillery upon this occasion; and placed in his front some pieces, which contributed not a little to throw the enemy into disorder.

On the other side, Philip, impelled by resentment, and confident in his numbers, was more solicitous of bringing the enemy to an engagement than prudent in taking measures for the success of it. He was advised by some of his generals to defer

the combat till the ensuing day, when his army would have recovered from their fatigue, and might be disposed into better order than their present hurry permitted them to observe. But it was now too late; the impatience of his troops was too great to be restrained; they pressed one upon the other, and no orders could curb their blind impetuosity. They were led on, however, in three bodies to oppose those of the English. John, king of Bohemia, conducted the first line, in which were included fifteen thousand Genoese crossbow-men, commanded by Anthony Doria; the second body was led by the count d'Alençon, brother to the king; and Philip himself was at the head of the third.

Aug. 26, 1346. About three in the afternoon the famous battle of Crecy began, by the French king's ordering the Genoese archers to charge; but they were so fatigued with their march, that they cried out for a little rest before they should engage. The count d'Alençon, being informed of their petition, rode up, and reviled them as cowards, commanding them to begin the onset without delay. Their reluctance to begin was still more increased by a heavy shower which fell that instant and relaxed their bow-strings, so that the discharge they made produced but very little effect. On the other hand, the English archers, who kept their bows in cases, and were favoured by a sudden gleam of sunshine that rather dazzled the enemy, let fly their arrows so thick, and with such good aim, that nothing was to be seen among the Genoese but hurry, terror, and dismay. The young prince of

Wales had presence of mind to take advantage of their confusion, and to lead on his line to the charge. The French cavalry, however, commanded by the count d'Alençon, wheeling round, sustained the combat, and began to hem the English round. The earls of Arundel and Northampton now came in to assist the prince, who appeared foremost in every shock, and wherever he appeared, turning the fortune of the day. The battle now raged around him, and the valour of a boy filled even veterans with astonishment. But their surprise at his courage could not give way to their fears for his safety. As the two earls were apprehensive that some mischance might happen to him in the end, an officer was dispatched to the king, desiring that succours might be sent to the prince's relief. Edward, who had all this time, with great tranquillity, viewed the engagement from a wind-mill, demanded, with seeming deliberation, if his son were dead; but being answered that he still lived, and was giving astonishing instances of his valour; "Then tell my generals," cried the king, "that he shall have no assistance from me; the honour of this day shall be his; let him show himself worthy the profession of arms, and let him be indebted to his own merit alone for victory." This speech, being reported to the prince and his attendants, inspired them with new courage; they made a fresh attack upon the French cavalry, and count Alençon, their bravest commander, was slain. This was the beginning of their total overthrow: the French, being now without a competent leader, were thrown into confusion: the Welch infantry rushed into the midst of

the conflict, and dispatched with their long knives those who had survived the fury of the former onset. It was in vain that the king of France seemed almost singly to maintain the combat; he endeavoured to animate his few followers, both by his voice and example: but the victory was too decisive to be resisted: while he was yet endeavouring to face the enemy, John de Hainault seized the reins of his horse, and, turning him round, carried him off the field of battle. In this engagement, thirty thousand of the French were killed; and among this number were John king of Bohemia, James king of Majorca, Ralph duke of Lorrain, nine counts, four-and-twenty bannerets, twelve hundred knights, fifteen hundred gentlemen, and four thousand men at arms. There is something remarkable in the fate of the Bohemian monarch; who, though blind, was yet willing to share in the engagement. This unfortunate prince, inquiring the fate of the day, was told that all was lost, and his son Charles obliged to retire desperately wounded; and that the prince of Wales bore down every thing before him. Having received this information, blind as he was, he commanded his knights to lead him into the hottest part of the battle against the young warrior: accordingly, four of them rushed with him into the thickest part of the hostile ranks, and they were all quickly slain.

The whole French army took to flight, and were put to the sword by the pursuers, till night stopped the carnage. The king, on his return to the camp, flew into the arms of the prince of Wales, and ex-

claimed, "My valiant son! continue as you have begun; you have acquitted yourself nobly, and are worthy of the kingdom that will be your inheritance." The next morning was foggy; and a party of the militia of Rouen, coming to join the French army, were routed by the English at the first onset; many more also were decoyed by some French standards, which the victors placed upon the mountains, and to which the fugitives resorted, where they were cut in pieces without mercy. Never was a victory more seasonable, or less bloody, to the English than this. Notwithstanding the great slaughter of the enemy, the conquerors lost but one esquire, three knights, and a few of inferior rank. The crest of the king of Bohemia was three ostrich feathers, with this motto, *Ich dien*, which signifies in the German language, "I serve." This was thought to be a proper prize to perpetuate the victory: it was accordingly added to the arms of the prince of Wales, and it has been adopted by all his successors.

But this victory was attended with still more substantial advantages; for Edward, as moderate in conquest as prudent in his measures to obtain it, resolved to secure an easy entrance into France for the future. With this view he laid siege to Calais, which was then defended by John de Vienne, an experienced commander, and supplied with every thing necessary for defence. The king, however, knowing the difficulty of taking so strong a town by force, resolved to reduce it by famine. He chose a secure station for his camp: drew entrenchments round the city, and made proper provision for his

soldiers to endure a winter campaign. These operations, though slow, were at length successful. It was in vain that the governor made a noble defence, that he excluded all the useless mouths from the city, which Edward generously permitted to pass unmolested through his camp. It was at length taken, after a siege of eleven months, [1347.] the defendants having been reduced to extremities by famine and fatigue. The obstinate resistance made by the townsmen was not a little displeasing to Edward; and he had often declared, that, when put in possession of the place, he would take signal revenge for the numbers of men he had lost during the siege. It was with great difficulty, therefore, that he was persuaded to accept their submission, and to spare their lives, upon condition that six of the most considerable citizens, should be sent to him, to be disposed of as he should think proper: but on these he was resolved to wreak his resentment, and he gave orders that they should be led into his camp, bare-headed and bare-footed, with ropes about their necks, in the manner of criminals just prepared for instant execution. When the intelligence of this fierce resolution was brought into the city, it spread new consternation among the inhabitants. Who should be the men that were thus to be offered up as victims to procure the safety of all the rest, and by their deaths appease the victor's resentment, was a fresh subject of dreadful inquiry. In this terrible suspense, one of the principal inhabitants, whose name was Eustace de St. Pierre, walked forward, and offered himself as willing to undergo any tortures that could pro-

cure his fellow-citizens safety. Five more soon followed his noble example; and these, marching out like criminals, laid the keys of their city at Edward's feet: but no submissions seemed sufficient to appease his resentment; and they would in all probability have suffered death, had not the generosity of their conduct affected the queen, who interceded in their behalf, and with some difficulty obtained their pardon.

Edward, having thus opened to himself a passage into France, by which he might at any time pour in his forces, and withdraw them with security, resolved on every method that could add strength or stability to his new acquisition. He ordered all the French inhabitants to leave the town, and peopled it with his own subjects from England. He also made it the staple, or principal market for wool, leather, tin, and lead, which were the principal English commodities for which there was any considerable demand upon the continent. All the English were obliged to convey their goods thither; and foreign merchants came to the same place to purchase them. By these means the city became populous, rich, and flourishing; and although it was near being taken some time after by treachery, it continued for above two centuries in the possession of the English, and braved all the military power of France.

The treachery, which nearly restored it to the French, arose from the perfidy of Aymar de Pavie, an Italian, who had been appointed governor of the place. He agreed to deliver it up to the enemy; when his perfidy was discovered by Edward,

who obliged him to carry on the treaty, and to persuade the enemy that he was still in their interests. Accordingly a day was appointed for the admission of the French troops into the city; while the king, with a strong body of forces, took care to
[1349.] prepare for their reception. All those who entered the city were immediately cut to pieces; and the garrison, with Edward and sir Walter Manny at their head, rushing out in the pursuit of the rest, a fierce and bloody engagement ensued, in which the king overthrew and took Eustace de Ribaumont, a man of remarkable strength and valour, with his own hand.

In this manner, the war between the English and French was carried on with mutual animosity: a war which at once thinned the inhabitants of the invaded country, while it drained that of the invaders. But a destruction still more terrible than that of war contributed, at this time, to desolate the wretched provinces of Europe. A pestilence, more dreadful than any mentioned in the annals of history, which had already made great havoc in Asia and Africa, came to settle upon the western world with increased malignity. It is said to have taken its origin in the great kingdom of Cathay, where it rose from the earth with the most horrid and sulphureous stench, destroying all the inhabitants, and even marking plants and minerals with its malignity. The fourth part of the people were cut off; and it particularly raged with such violence in London,
[1349.] that in one year's space there were buried in the Charter House church-yard above fifty thousand persons. It was in the midst

of this terrible infliction from nature that the ambition of Edward and Philip was exerted for new conquests, and was adding to the calamities of mankind. Yet still these ravages were silently repaired by commerce and industry: these arts, which were then despised by princes, were laying the seeds of future opulence and increased population. The arts of peace had for some time revived in Italy, and were gradually travelling westward; the refinements and the pleasures of sense every day began to improve, although intellectual refinements were almost entirely unknown. Sensual enjoyments must ever be carried to some height, before mankind can find leisure or taste for entertainments of a more exquisite nature.

Nor was England free from internal wars during this dreary period. While Edward was reaping victories upon the continent, the Scots, ever willing to embrace opportunities of rapine and revenge, invaded the frontiers with a numerous army, headed by David Bruce their king. This unexpected invasion, at such a juncture, alarmed the English, but was not capable of intimidating them. Lionel, Edward's son, who was left guardian of England during his father's absence, was yet too young to take upon him the command of an army; but the victories on the continent seemed to inspire even women with valour: Philippa, Edward's queen, took upon her the conduct of the field, and prepared to repulse the enemy in person. Accordingly, having made lord Percy general under her, she met the Scots at a place called Nevill's Cross, near Durham, and offered them battle. The Scotish

king was no less impatient to engage; he imagined that he might obtain an easy victory against undisciplined troops headed by a woman. But he was miserably deceived; his army was quickly routed and driven from the field; fifteen thousand of his men were cut to pieces; and himself, with many of his nobles and knights, were taken prisoners, and carried in triumph to London.

This victory diffused universal joy through the nation; a captive king was an object that flattered their pride, and they soon had new reasons for exultation. Philip, who was surnamed the Fortunate upon coming to the crown of France, ended his
[1350.] life under the accumulation of every misfortune that could render a king unhappy. John, his son, succeeded him on the throne, which was but ill supported by Philip, and still worse by him. This weak yet virtuous prince, upon coming to the crown, found himself at the head of an exhausted nation, and a divided and factious nobility. France at that time resembled England under the reign of a prince of the same name. The parliament consisted of barons who were despotic over their own hereditary possessions; and they obliged John their king to sign a charter very much resembling the Magna Charta which had formerly been signed by his namesake of England. The warlike resources, therefore, of France and England were at this time very unequal. John was at the head of a nobility that acknowledged no subordination among each other; they led their dependent slaves to battle, and obeyed their superiors only as it suited their inclination. Their king

might more justly be said to command a number of small armies under distinct leaders, than one vast machine operating with uniformity and united efforts. The rench barons paid their own soldiers, punished their transgressions, and rewarded their fidelity. But the forces of England were under a very different establishment; the main body of the English army was composed of soldiers indiscriminately levied throughout the nation, paid by the king, and regarding him alone as the source of preferment or disgrace. Instead of personal attendance, the nobility contributed supplies in money; and there was only such a number of nobles in the army as might keep the spirit of honour alive, without injuring military subordination.

It was in this state of things that a short truce, which had been concluded between Edward and Philip, was dissolved by the death of the latter; and Edward, well pleased with the factions that then prevailed in France, resolved to seize the opportunity of increasing its distresses. Accordingly the Black Prince was sent into France with his army, on board a fleet of two hundred sail; and landing in Gascony, carried his devastations [1355.] into the heart of the country. On the other hand, Edward himself made an irruption on the side of Calais, at the head of a numerous army, and ravaged all the open country. In the mean time John, who was yet unprepared to oppose the progress of the enemy, continued a quiet spectator of their insults; nor was it till the succeeding summer's campaign that he resolved to attack the

Black Prince, whose army was by this time reduced to a body of about twelve thousand men. With such a trifling force had this young warrior ventured to penetrate into the heart of France, with a design of joining his troops to those of the duke of Lancaster. But he soon found that his scheme was impracticable; the country before him was too well guarded to permit his advance; and all the bridges behind him were broken down; which effectually barred a retreat. In this embarrassing situation, his perplexity was increased by being informed that the king of France was actually marching at the head of sixty thousand men to intercept him. He had at first thought of retreating; but, soon finding it impossible, he determined calmly to wait the approach of the enemy; and, notwithstanding the disparity of forces, to commit all to the hazard of a battle.

It was at a place called Maupertuis, near Poictiers, that both armies came in sight of each other. The French king might very easily have starved the English into any terms he thought proper to impose; but such was the impatient valour of the French nobility, and such their certainty of success, that it might have been equally fatal to attempt repressing their ardour to engage. In the mean time, while both armies were drawn out, and expecting the signal to begin, they were stopped by the appearance of the cardinal of Perigord, who attempted to be a mediator between them. However, John, who made himself sure of victory, would listen to no other terms than the restitution of Calais;

with which the Black Prince refusing to comply, the onset was deferred till the next morning, for which both sides waited in anxious suspense.

It was during this interval that the young prince showed himself worthy of conquest; he strengthened his post by new entrenchments; he placed three hundred men in ambush, with as many archers, who were commanded to attack the enemy in flank during the heat of the engagement. Having taken these precautions, and the morning beginning to appear, he ranged his army in three divisions; the van being commanded by the earl of Warwick; the rear, by the earls of Salisbury and Suffolk; and the main body by himself. In like manner the king of France arranged his forces in three divisions; the first commanded by the duke of Orléans; the second by the dauphin, attended by his younger brothers; while himself led up the main body, seconded by his youngest and favourite son, then about fourteen years of age. As the English were to be attacked only by marching up a long narrow lane, the French suffered greatly from their archers, who were posted on each side behind the hedges. Nor were they in a better situation upon emerging from this danger, being met by the Black Prince himself, at the head of a chosen body of troops, who made a furious onset upon their forces, already in great disorder. A dreadful overthrow ensued: those who were as yet in the lane recoiled upon their own forces; while the English troops who had been placed in ambush took that opportunity to increase the confusion,

Sept. 19, 1356.

and confirm the victory. The dauphin, and the duke of Orléans, were among the first that fled. The king of France himself made the utmost efforts to retrieve by his valour what his rashness had forfeited: but his single courage was unable to stop that consternation which had now become general through his army; and his cavalry soon flying, he found himself totally exposed to the enemy's fury. He saw his nobles falling round him, valiantly fighting in his defence, and his youngest son wounded by his side. At length, spent with fatigue, and despairing of success, he thought of yielding himself a prisoner; and frequently cried out, that he was ready to deliver himself to his cousin, the prince of Wales. The honour of taking him, however, was reserved for a much more ignoble hand; he was seized by Dennis de Morbec, a knight of Arras, who had been obliged to fly his country for murder.

This success was, in a great measure, owing to the valour and conduct of the Black Prince; but his moderation in victory was a nobler triumph than had ever graced any conqueror. He came forth to meet the captive monarch with an air of pitying modesty; he remonstrated with him in the most humble manner, when he began to complain of his misfortunes, that he still had the comfort left of reflecting, that, though unsuccessful, he had done all that deserved to ensure conquest; he promised, that a submissive deference to his dignity should never be wanting to soften his captivity; and at table he actually refused to sit down, but

stood among the number of his prisoner's attendants, declaring that it did not become him, as a subject, to sit down in the presence of a king.

In the following spring, the prince conducted his royal prisoner through London, [1357.] attended by an infinite concourse of people of all ranks and stations. His modesty upon this occasion was not less than before: the king of France was clad in royal apparel, and mounted on a white steed, distinguished by its size and beauty; while the prince himself rode by his side upon a mean little horse, and in very plain attire.

Two kings prisoners in the same court, and at the same time, were considered as glorious achievements; but all that England gained by them was only glory. Whatever was won in France, with all the dangers of war, and the expense of preparation, was successively, and in a manner silently, lost without the mortification of a defeat. It may be easily supposed, that the treaties which were made with the captive kings were highly advantageous to the conquerors; but these treaties were no longer observed than while the English had it in their power to enforce obedience. It is true, that John observed his engagements as far as he was able; but by being a prisoner he lost his authority, and his misfortunes had rendered him contemptible at home. The dauphin, and the states of France, rejected the treaties he had been induced to sign; and prepared, in good earnest, to repel the meditated invasions of the conqueror. All the considerable towns were put in a posture of defence; and every thing valuable in the [1359.]

kingdom was secured in fortified places. It was in vain, therefore, that Edward tried to allure the dauphin to hazard a battle, by sending him a defiance; it was impossible to make that cautious prince change the plan of his operations; it was in vain that Edward alleged the obligation of the treaties which had been signed at London, and plundered the country round to provoke an engagement. He at length thought fit to listen to equitable terms of peace, which was concluded upon condition that king John should be restored to liberty, on paying a ransom of about a million and a half of our money. It was stipulated, that Edward should for ever renounce all claim [1360.] to the kingdom of France; and should only remain possessed of the territories of Poictou, Saintonge, l'Agenois, Perigord, the Limousin, Quercy, Rouergue, l'Angoumois, and other districts in that quarter, together with Calais, Guisnes, Montreuil, and the county of Ponthieu, on the other side of France: some other stipulations were made in favour of the allies of England; and forty hostages were sent to England, as a security for the execution of these conditions.

Upon John's return to his dominions, he found himself unable to comply with the terms of peace that had been just concluded. He was without finances, at the head of an exhausted state; his soldiers without discipline, and his peasants without subordination. These had risen in great numbers; and one of the chiefs of the banditti assumed the title of the Friend of God and the Terror of Man. A citizen of Sens, named John Gouge, also got

himself, by means of his robberies, to be acknowledged king; and he soon caused as many calamities by his devastations as the real king had brought on by his misfortunes. Such was the state of that wretched kingdom upon the return of its captive monarch; and yet, such was his absurdity, that he immediately prepared for a crusade into the Holy Land, before he was well replaced on the throne. Had his exhausted subjects been able to equip him for this chimerical project, it is probable he would have gone through with it; but their miseries were such, that they were even too poor to pay his ransom. This was a breach of treaty that John would not submit to; and he was heard to express himself in a very noble manner upon the occasion: "Though," says he, "good faith should be banished from the rest of the earth, yet she ought still to retain her habitation in the breast of kings." In consequence of this declaration he actually returned to England, and yielded himself a [1364.] prisoner, since he could not be honourably free. It is said by some, that his passion for the countess of Salisbury was the real cause of this journey; but we want at this time the foundation for such an injurious report. He was lodged in the Savoy, the palace where he had resided during his captivity: and, soon after, he closed an unfortunate reign by his death, which happened in the fifty-fifth year of his age.

Charles, surnamed the Wise, succeeded his father on the throne of France; and this monarch, merely by the force of a finely conducted policy, and even though suffering some defeats, restored his

country to tranquillity and power. He quelled and dissipated a set of banditti who had associated themselves under the name of Companions, and who had long been a terror to the peaceable inhabitants. He had them enrolled into a body, and led them into the kingdom of Castile against Peter surnamed the Cruel, whom his subjects had dethroned, and who, by means of an alliance with the English, endeavoured to get himself reinstated upon the throne. In consequence of these alliances, the English and French again came to an engagement; their armies on the one side commanded by the Black Prince; on the other, by Henry of Transtamare, and Bertrand du Guesclin, one of the most consummate generals and accomplished characters of the age in which he lived. However, the usual good fortune of the English prince prevailed; Henry lost above twelve thousand men, while only four knights and forty private men on the side of the English were slain.

April 3, 1367.

Nevertheless, these victories were attended with very few good effects. The English, by their frequent supplies, had been nearly exhausted, and were unable to continue an army in the field. Charles, on the other hand, cautiously forbore coming to any decisive engagement, but was contented to let his enemies waste their strength in attempts to plunder a fortified country. When they were retired, he was then sure to sally forth, and possess himself of such places as they were not strong enough to defend. He first fell upon Ponthieu; the citizens of Abbeville opened their

[1369.]

gates to him; those of St. Valeri, Rue, and Crotoy, imitated the example; and that part of the country was, in a little time, reduced to submission. The southern provinces were, in the same manner, invaded by his generals with equal success; while the Black Prince, destitute of supplies from England, and wasted by a cruel and consumptive disorder, was obliged to return to his native country, leaving the affairs of the south of France in a most desperate condition.

In this exigence, the resentment of the king of England was excited to the utmost pitch; and he seemed resolved to take signal vengeance on his enemies on the continent. But the fortunate occasion seemed now elapsed; and all his designs were marked with ill success. The earl of Pembroke, and his whole army, were intercepted at sea, and taken prisoners by Henry, king of Castile. This nobleman in person attempted to embark with an army for Bourdeaux; but was detained by contrary winds, and obliged to lay aside the expedition. Sir Robert Knolles, one of his generals on the continent, at the head of thirty thousand men, was defeated by Bertrand du Guesclin; while the duke of Lancaster, at the head of twenty-five thousand men, had the mortification of seeing his troops diminished one half by flying parties, without ever coming to a battle. Such was the picture that presented itself to this victorious monarch in the decline of life; and this might well serve as a lesson to the princes of the age, that more permanent advantages are obtained by wisdom than by valour. In addition to other grounds

[1372.]

of uneasiness, he had the mortification to see his authority despised at home. It was in vain that he sought refuge, in his age, from the complaints of his subjects, in the arms of a favourite mistress, whose name was Alice Pierce: this only served to exasperate his people the more against him, and to turn their indignation into contempt. But what, of all other things, served to gloom the latter part of this splendid reign, was the approaching death of the Black Prince, whose constitution showed but too manifestly the symptoms of a speedy dissolution. This valiant and accomplished prince

[1376.] died in the forty-sixth year of his age, leaving behind him a character without a single blemish, and a degree of sorrow among the people that time could scarcely alleviate. His affability, clemency, and liberal disposition, have been celebrated by different historians. Though born in an age in which military virtues alone were held in esteem, he cultivated the arts of peace, and seemed ever more happy in deserving praise than in obtaining it.

The king was most sensibly affected with the loss of his son, and tried every art to remove his uneasiness. He had banished his concubine some time before from his presence; but took her again, in hopes of finding some consolation in her company. He removed himself entirely from the duties and burthens of the state, and left his kingdom to be plundered by a set of rapacious ministers. He did not survive the consequences of his bad conduct; but died about a year after the prince, at Shene, in Surrey, deserted by all his courtiers, even by those who had grown rich by his bounty. He expired

in the sixty-fifth year of his age, and the fifty-first of his reign; a prince more admired than loved by his subjects, and more an object of their applause than their sorrow. June 21, 1377.

The reign of Edward was rather brilliant than truly serviceable to his subjects. If England, during these shining triumphs on the continent, gained any real advantage, it was only that of having a spirit of elegance and honour diffused among the higher ranks of the people. In all conquests, something is gained in civil life from the people subdued; and as France was at that time evidently more civilised than England, the imitative islanders, as they were then called, adopted the arts of the people they overcame. The meanest soldier in the English army now began to follow his leader from love, and not compulsion; he was brave from sentiment alone, and had the honour of his country beating in his breast, even though in the humblest station. This was the time when chivalry was at its highest pitch; and many of the successes of England were owing to that romantic spirit which the king endeavoured to diffuse, and of which he was the most shining example. It was this spirit that in some measure served to soften the ferocity of the age; being a mixture of love, generosity, and war. Instead of being taught the sciences, the sons of the nobility were brought into the field as soon as they were able, and instructed in no other arts but those of arms; such as the method of sitting on horseback, of wielding the lance, running at the ring, flourishing at a tournament, and addressing a mistress. To attain these, was

considered as the sum of all human acquirements; and though war formed their only study, the rules of tactics, encampments, stratagems, and fortifications, were almost totally disregarded.

[1379.] It was in this reign that the order of the Garter was instituted; the number received into which was to consist of twenty-four persons, beside the king. A vulgar story prevails, but unsupported by any ancient authority, that the countess of Salisbury, at a ball, happening to drop her garter, the king took it up and presented it to her with these words, "Honi soi qui mal y pense:" Evil to him that evil thinks. This accident is said to have given rise to the order and the motto; it being the spirit of the times to mix love and war together, and for knights to plume themselves upon the slightest tokens that their mistresses were pleased to bestow.

Edward left many children by his queen Philippa of Hainault; his eldest son, the Black Prince, died before him, but left a son, named Richard, who succeeded to the throne; Edward's second son was Lionel, duke of Clarence; the third son was called John of Gaunt, from the place of his birth, and was afterwards created duke of Lancaster; the fourth was Edmund, earl of Cambridge, afterwards duke of York; the fifth was Thomas, duke of Gloucester, the most ambitious and enterprising of all his family. There were several daughters also; but, as there is nothing material in their history, we shall pass over their names without notice.

CHAPTER XV.

RICHARD II.

RICHARD II. came to the throne of his grandfather when as yet but eleven years of age, and found the people discontented and poor, the nobles proud and rebellious. A spirit of profusion had entered into the kingdom with the spirit of gallantry; which, while it produced indolence and rapacity among the higher orders, produced want and disobedience among the poor.

As the king was a minor, the government was vested in the hands of his three uncles, the dukes of Lancaster, York, and Gloucester; the difference of whose dispositions, it was supposed, would serve to check the defects of each other. Lancaster, though experienced during the late reign in government, was neither popular nor enterprising; York was indolent and weak; Gloucester, turbulent, popular, and ambitious. Under the secret influence of these, without any regency being appointed, the whole system of government was kept together for some years; the authority established during the former reign still continuing to operate in this.

But though government was carried on, yet it was not without many commotions, arising either

from the impatience of the people or the ambition of the great: as the late king had left the realm involved in a dangerous and expensive war, which demanded large and constant supplies, the murmurs of the people increased in proportion. Nor were they lessened by the manner of carrying on expeditions; which, in general, were languid, and upon the whole unsuccessful. The duke of Lancaster laid claim to the crown of Castile, and made a fruitless expedition; the war with France produced no enterprise of lustre, and that with Scotland was rather unsuccessful. The expenses, however, of the armaments to face the enemy on every side, and a want of economy in the administration, entirely exhausted the treasury; and a new tax of three groats, on every person above fifteen, was granted by parliament as a supply. The indignation of the people had been for some time increasing; but a tax so unequitable, in which the rich paid no more than the poor, kindled the resentment of the latter into a flame.

Notwithstanding the numbers who by war, by a residence in towns, and by other means, had become free, there were still multitudes in the country who had lands in villainage, that were only slaves to the lords from whom they held. These had seen the advantages of liberty, from its effects upon those of equal rank who had gone to live in towns; and they panted for a participation of those advantages. Several of these had become opulent enough to purchase their freedom; but, by an unjust act of parliament in this reign, these purchases were declared of no validity. This act the peasants con-

sidered as an infraction of the laws of humanity; and such, indeed, it must be allowed to have been. But it had long been the prescriptive manner of reasoning, to have no regard for the rights of a certain class of men who were supposed too low for justice. The seeds of discontent were still more cultivated by the preaching of several men, who went about the country inculcating the natural equality of mankind, and consequently the right that all had to an equal participation of the goods of nature. Hitherto we have seen popular insurrections only in towns; but we now find the spirit of freedom gaining ground in the country. Our citizens soon began to perceive their own strength; but it was a considerable time before the peasantry who had been annexed to the soil, claimed a share in those advantages. We, in this first instance, find a knowledge of the rights of humanity diffusing itself even to the very lowest of the people, and exerting itself in rude and terrible efforts for freedom.

The minds of the peasants being thus prepared for insurrection, the manner of collecting this unjust poll-tax soon furnished them with [1382] a pretext for beginning the revolt. It began in Essex, where a report was industriously spread, that the peasants were to be destroyed, their houses burned, and their farms plundered. A blacksmith well known by the name of Wat Tyler, was the first that excited them to arms. The tax-gatherers, coming to this man's house while he was at work, demanded payment for his daughter, which he refused, alleging that she was under the age men-

tioned in the act. One of the brutal collectors insisted on her being a full-grown woman, and immediately attempted giving a very indecent proof of his assertion. This provoked the father to such a degree, that he instantly struck him dead with a blow of his hammer. The by-standers applauded his spirit, and, one and all, resolved to defend his conduct. He was considered as a champion in the cause, and appointed the leader and spokesman of the people. It is easy to imagine the disorders committed by this tumultuous rabble; the whole neighbourhood rose in arms; they burnt and plundered wherever they came, and revenged upon their former masters all those insults which they had long sustained with impunity. As the discontent was general, the insurgents increased in proportion as they approached the capital. The flame soon propagated itself into Kent, Hertfordshire, Surrey, Sussex, Suffolk, Norfolk, Cambridge, and Lincoln. They were found to amount to above a hundred thousand men by the time they arrived at Blackheath: whence they sent a message to the king, who had taken shelter in the Tower, desiring a conference with him. With this message Richard was desirous of complying, but was intimidated by their fierce demeanour. In the mean time they had entered the city, burning and plundering the houses of such as were obnoxious from their power, or remarkable for their riches. They broke into the Savoy palace, belonging to the duke of Lancaster, and put several of his attendants to death. Their animosity was particularly levelled against the lawyers, to whom they showed no

mercy. Such was the vehemence of their fury, that the king began to tremble for his own safety; and, knowing that the Tower was not capable of standing against an assault, he went out among them, and desired to know their demands. They now made a very humble remonstrance, requiring a general pardon, the abolition of slavery, freedom of commerce in market-towns, and a fixed rent instead of those services required by the tenure of villainage. As these requests were reasonable, the king soon complied; and charters were accordingly made out, ratifying the grant. In the mean time another body of these insurgents had broke into the Tower, and murdered the primate and the treasurer, with some other persons of distinction. They then divided themselves into bodies, and took up their quarters in different parts of the city. At the head of one of these was Wat Tyler, who led his men into Smithfield, where he was met by the king, who invited him to a conference, under a pretence of hearing and redressing his grievances. Tyler, ordering his companions to retire till he should give them a signal, boldly ventured to meet the king in the midst of his retinue; and accordingly began the conference. The demands of this demagogue are censured by all the historians of the time as insolent and extravagant; and yet nothing can be more just than those they have delivered for him. He required that all slaves should be set free; that all commonages should be open to the poor as well as to the rich; and that a general pardon should be passed for the late outrages. Whilst he made

these demands, he now and then lifted up his sword in a menacing manner; which insolence so raised the indignation of William Walworth, then mayor of London, attending on the king, that, without considering the danger to which he exposed his majesty, he stunned Tyler with a blow of his mace; while one of the king's knights, riding up, dispatched him with his sword. The mutineers, seeing their leader fall, prepared themselves to take revenge; and their bows were now bent for execution, when Richard, though not yet fifteen years of age, rode up to the rebels, and, with admirable presence of mind, cried out, "What, my people, will you then kill your king? Be not concerned for the loss of your leader; I myself will now be your general; follow me into the field, and you shall have whatever you desire." The awed multitude immediately desisted; they followed the king, as if mechanically, into the fields; and there he granted them the same charter that he had before given to their companions.

These grants, for a short time, gained the king great popularity; and it is probable it was his own desire to have them continued; but the nobles had long tasted the sweets of power, and were unwilling to admit any other to a participation. The parliament soon revoked these charters of enfranchisement and pardon; the low people were reduced to the same slavish condition as before, and several of the ringleaders were punished with capital severity. The insurrections of the barons against their kings are branded in our history with no great air of invective; but the tumults of the

people against the barons are marked with all the virulence of reproach.

The cruelty which was exercised against the popular leaders upon this occasion created no small enmity against the king. He had first granted them a charter, which implied the justice of their demands; and he was seen, soon after, weak enough to revoke what he had before allowed the justice of. It is probable also, that his uncles were not backward in increasing this general dislike against him; as by such means they were more like to continue in their present authority. His own capricious conduct, indeed, might very well countenance them in the restrictions they placed upon him; as he very soon testified an eager desire to govern, without any of the requisites to fit him for such a difficult undertaking: he soon discovered an attachment to favourites, without any merit on their side to entitle them to such flattering distinctions. Robert Vere, earl of Oxford, a young man, whose person was faultless, but whose morals were debauched, had acquired an entire ascendant over him. This nobleman was first created marquis of Dublin, and then duke of Ireland, with the entire sovereignty, during life, of that island. He gave him his own cousin in marriage; and soon after permitted him to repudiate her for another lady, of whom he was enamoured. He soon became the channel through which all royal favour passed to the people; and he possessed all the power, while the king had only the shadow, of royalty.

A partiality in princes ever produces animosity

among their subjects. Those noblemen who were either treated with disrespect by the favourite, or who thought that they had themselves better pretensions to favour, instantly took the alarm, and combined against him. At the head of this association were, Mowbray, earl of Nottingham; Fitz-Alan, earl of Arundel; Percy, earl of Northumberland; Montacute, earl of Salisbury; and Beauchamp, earl of Warwick. These, uniting, resolved on the destruction of the favourite; and they began by marking out Michael de la Pole, who
[1386.] was then chancellor, and Oxford's chief friend and supporter, as the first object of their vengeance. He was accordingly impeached in parliament; and, although nothing material was alleged against him, such was the interest of the conspiring barons, that he was condemned, and deprived of his office.

From punishing his ministers, they soon after ventured to attack the king in person. Under a pretence that he was as yet unable to govern, although he was at that time twenty years of age, they appointed a commission of fourteen persons, to whom the sovereign power was to be transferred for a year. This was, in fact, depriving the king of all power, and oppressing the kingdom with a confirmed aristocracy. This measure was driven forward by the duke of Gloucester; and only those of his own faction were admitted as members of the committee. It was not without a struggle that the king saw himself thus totally divested of authority; he endeavoured first to gain over the parliament to his interests, by influencing

the sheriffs of each county, who were then the only returning officers. This measure failing, he applied to the judges; and they, [1387.] either from motives of interest, or from conviction, declared, that the commission which had deprived him of his authority was unlawful; and that those who procured or advised it were punishable with death. This sentence was quickly opposed by declarations from the lords: the duke of Gloucester saw his danger if the king should prevail; and, secretly assembling his party, he appeared in arms at Haringay Park, near Highgate, at the head of a body of men, more than sufficient to intimidate the king and all his adherents. These insurgents, sensible of their own power, were now resolved to make use of the occasion; and began by demanding of the king the names of those who had advised him to his late rash measures. A few days after they appeared armed in his presence, and accused, by name, the archbishop of York, the duke of Ireland, the earl of Suffolk, and sir Robert Tresilian, one of the judges, who had declared in his favour, together with sir Nicholas Brembre, as public and dangerous enemies to the state. It was now too late for the opposite party to attempt any other vindication of their conduct than by arms. The duke of Ireland fled into Cheshire, where he attempted to raise a body of forces; but was quickly obliged to retire into Flanders, on the arrival of the duke of Gloucester with a superior army. Soon after the king was obliged to summon a parliament; an accusation was drawn up against five of his counsellors: of

these only sir Nicholas Brembre was present; [1388.] and he was quickly found guilty, condemned, and executed, together with sir Robert Tresilian, who had been discovered and taken during the interval. But the blood of one or two was not sufficient to satiate the resentment of the duke of Gloucester; lord Beauchamp of Holt was shortly after condemned and executed; and sir Simon Burley, who had been appointed the king's governor, shared the same fate, although the queen continued for three hours on her knees before the duke, imploring his pardon.

It might be supposed that, after such a total subversion of the royal power, there would be no more struggles, during this reign, between the prince and his nominal subjects; but, whether from the fluctuation of opinions among the people, or from the influence of a military force which had been lately levied against France, we find Richard once more resolved to shake off that power which had long controlled him, and actually bringing the parliament to second his resolutions.

[1389.] In an extraordinary council of the nobility assembled after Easter, he, to the astonishment of all present, desired to know his age; and being told that he was turned of two-and-twenty, he alleged, that it was time for him to govern without help, and that there was no reason that he should be deprived of those rights which the meanest of his subjects enjoyed. The lords answering, in some confusion, that he had certainly an indisputable right to take upon himself the government of the kingdom: "Yes," replied he, "I

have long been under the government of tutors; and I will now first show my right to power by their removal." He then ordered Thomas Arundel, whom the commissioners had lately appointed chancellor, to give up the seal, which he next day delivered to William of Wickham, bishop of Winchester. He next removed the duke of Gloucester, the earl of Warwick, and other lords of the opposition, from the council. The bishop of Hereford lost his office of treasurer; the earl of Arundel was deprived of the post of high-admiral; all the great officers of the household, as well as the judges, were changed; and all the offices felt the influence of this extraordinary revolution.

The king, being thus left at liberty to conduct the business of government at discretion, began by showing many marks of moderation towards those who before had endeavoured to depress his power: he seemed to be entirely reconciled to his uncles; and, by remitting some subsidies which had been granted him, he acquired for a time the affection of the people. But he wanted those arts that are usually found to procure a lasting respect; he was fond of luxurious pleasures and idle ostentations; he admitted the meanest ranks to his familiarity; and his conversation was not adapted to impress them with a reverence for his morals or abilities. His military talents, on which mankind then placed the greatest value, were seldom exerted, and never with any great success. The French war was scarcely heard of; and some successful inroads of the Scots, particularly that which brought on a disputed victory at Otter-

bourne, were only opposed by those barons whose possessions lay along the frontier. He gained indeed some reputation for arms in Ireland; but his successes there were too insignificant to give him a decisive character. Hence the small regard which the public bore his person disposed them to murmur against his administration, and to receive with avidity every complaint which discontent or ambition suggested to his prejudice.

Whether the duke of Gloucester was secretly displeased with this mean disposition in his royal nephew, or wanted to make himself king by fomenting jealousies against him, must remain unknown; but certain it is, that he used every art to increase the aversion of the nation against him, and to establish his own popularity. He represented

[1396.] the peace which had been concluded with France, as the result of the king's pusillanimity; and plausibly appeared to lament that Richard should have degenerated so far from the heroic virtues of his father. He frequently spoke with contempt of the king's person and government, and deliberated upon the lawfulness of throwing off all allegiance to him. These were insults that deserved to be chastised in any subject; but which called aloud for punishment in him, whose popularity was dangerous, and who more than once had testified a disposition to rebel. As all his conduct was secretly observed by the king's emissaries, Richard at length formed a resolution of ridding himself entirely both of him and his faction, sensible that he then had the parliament entirely at his disposal. He accordingly

ordered Gloucester to be arrested and sent over to Calais, at which place there was [1397.] no danger of a rescue from his numerous adherents. The earls of Arundel and Warwick were seized at the same time; and a parliament was summoned at Westminster, which the king knew to be obedient to his will. The majority of that assembly passed whatever acts he thought proper to dictate: they annulled for ever the commission of fourteen, which had usurped upon his authority; they repealed all those acts which had condemned his former ministers; and revoked the general pardon which the king had granted, upon his assuming the reins of government. In consequence of this, several of the party of Gloucester were impeached, condemned, and executed. Fitz-Alan, archbishop of Canterbury, was banished, and his temporalities were sequestered. The earl of Arundel vainly attempted to plead the king's general pardon to stop his execution; the earl of Warwick, showing signs of contrition, had his life spared, but was banished to the Isle of Man. The greatest criminal yet remained; and a warrant was accordingly issued to the earl mareschal, governor of Calais, to bring over the duke of Gloucester, to take his trial as the rest had done. It is probable that this nobleman would have shared the same fate with the rest of his party; but he was privately dispatched in prison, being smothered (as it afterwards appeared) between two pillows, by his keepers.

The death of a nobleman so popular as the duke, did not fail to increase those animosities

which had already taken deep root in the kingdom. The aggrandisement of some new favourites contributed still more to make the king odious; but though he seemed resolved, by all his actions, to set his subjects against him, it was accident that gave the occasion for his overthrow. After the destruction of the duke of Gloucester, and the heads of that party, a misunderstanding broke out among those noblemen who had joined in the prosecution. Henry duke of Hereford appeared in parliament, and accused the duke of Norfolk of having spoken seditious words against his majesty in a private conversation. Norfolk denied the charge; gave Hereford the lie; and offered to prove his innocence by single combat. As proofs were wanting for legal trial, the lords readily acquiesced in that mode of determination; the time and place were appointed; and the whole nation waited with anxious suspense for the event. At length the day arrived on which this duel was to be fought; and as combats of this kind were then very prevalent, it may not be amiss to describe the ceremonies on that occasion. Hereford, the challenger, first appeared on a white charger, gaily caparisoned, armed at all points, and holding his drawn sword. When he approached the lists, the mareschal demanded his name and business; to which he replied, " I am Henry of Lancaster, duke of Hereford, come hither according to my duty, against Thomas Mowbray, duke of Norfolk, a false traitor to God and the king, the realm and me." Then taking the oath that his quarrel was just and true,

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he desired to enter the lists; which being granted, he sheathed his sword, pulled down his beaver, crossed himself on the forehead, seized his lance, passed the barrier, alighted, and sat down in a chair of green velvet placed at one end of the lists. He had scarce taken his seat when the king came into the field with great pomp, attended by the lords, the count de St. Paul, who came from France on purpose to see this famous trial, and ten thousand men at arms, to prevent tumults and disturbances. His majesty being seated in his chair of state, the king at arms proclaimed that none but such as were appointed to marshal the field should presume to touch the lists upon pain of death. Then another herald proclaimed aloud, "Behold here Henry of Lancaster, duke of Hereford, who has entered the lists to perform his devoir against Thomas Mowbray, duke of Norfolk, on pain of being counted false and recreant." Just then the duke of Norfolk appeared in arms, mounted upon a barbed horse, with a coat of arms of crimson velvet, embroidered with lions of silver and mulberry-trees; and, having taken his oath before the constable and mareschal, entered the field exclaiming aloud, "God defend the right!" Then alighting from his horse, he placed himself in a chair of crimson velvet opposite to his antagonist, at the other end of the lists. After which the mareschal, having measured their lances, delivered one to the challenger, and sent a knight with the other to the duke of Norfolk; and proclamation was made that they should prepare for the combat. Accordingly, mounting their

horses, and closing their beavers, they fixed their lances in rest, and the trumpets sounded the charge. Hereford began his career with great violence; but before he could join his antagonist, the king threw down his warder, and the heralds interposed. By the advice and authority of his parliamentary commissioners, he stopped the combat, and ordered both the combatants to leave the kingdom, banishing the duke of Norfolk for life, and his antagonist for ten years. Thus, one was condemned to exile without being charged with any offence, and the other without being convicted of any crime. The duke of Norfolk was overwhelmed with grief and despondence at the judgement awarded against him; he retired to Venice, where, in a little time after, he died of a broken heart. Hereford's behaviour on this occasion was resigned and submissive; which so pleased the king, that he consented to shorten the date of his banishment four years; and he also granted him letters patent ensuring him the enjoyment of any inheritance which should fall to him during his absence. But nothing could be more fluctuating than Richard's promises or friendship. Henry, retiring into Flanders, and thence to Paris, found there a very favourable reception from the French king. He even opened a treaty of marriage with the daughter of the duke of Berry, uncle to the king of France; but was prevented from completing the alliance by the interest of Richard, who, dreading the increasing power of the banished duke, sent over the earl of Salisbury to Paris, with instructions to break off the match. Such

an unexpected injury could not fail to aggravate the resentment of Hereford; but he had still more cogent reasons for anger, upon the death of his father, the duke of Lancaster, which happened shortly after. Richard, as we before observed, had given him letters patent, empowering him to possess any successions that should fall to him while abroad; but, being now afraid of strengthening the hands of a man whom he had injured, he revoked those letters, and retained the possession of the Lancaster estate to himself.

Such complicated injuries served to inflame the resentment of Hereford against the king; and although he had hitherto concealed them, he now set no bounds to his indignation, but even conceived a desire of dethroning a person who had shown himself so unworthy of power. Indeed, no man could be better qualified for an enterprise of this nature than the duke of Hereford: he was cool, cautious, discerning, and resolute. He had served with distinction against the infidels of Lithuania; and he had joined to his other merits those of piety and valour. He was the idol of the soldiery, and the favourite of the people: he was immensely rich, and, by blood or alliance, connected with the most potent families of the nation. On the other hand, the king, finding himself above all restraint, gave himself up to a soft effeminate life, regardless of his own safety, and of the good of the public. His ministers, following the example of their sovereign, gave little attention to business, but saw, without any concern, the honour of the nation sinking into contempt. In this situation all

people naturally turned their eyes upon the banished earl, as the only person from whom they could expect relief or redress. He was stimulated by private injuries; and had alliances and fortune sufficient to give weight to his measures. The malcontents only waited for the absence of the king to put their schemes into execution; and for these an opportunity was quickly offered.

The earl of March, presumptive heir to the crown, having been appointed the king's lieutenant in Ireland, was slain in a skirmish with the natives of that country; which so incensed Richard, that, unmindful of his precarious situation at home, he resolved with a numerous army to revenge his death in person. [1399.] The duke of Lancaster (for that was the title which Hereford assumed upon the death of his father) being informed of Richard's departure for Ireland, instantly embarked at Vannes in Bretagne, with a retinue of sixty persons, in three small vessels, and landed at Ravenspur in Yorkshire. The earl of Northumberland, who had long been a malcontent, together with Henry Percy his son, who, from his ardent valour, was surnamed Hotspur, immediately joined him with their forces. After this junction, the concourse of people, coming to enlist under his banner was so great, that, in a few days, his army amounted to threescore thousand men.

The duke of York had been left guardian of the realm during Richard's absence; but his efforts were ineffectual, as the most powerful persons who espoused the king's interests were then actually with him in Ireland. The duke, however, as-

sembled a body of forty thousand men at St. Alban's; but found them either quite dispirited, or more attached to the cause of the rebels than of the crown. It had been Henry's policy, from the beginning, to hide the real motives of his expedition, and to give out that he only aimed at the recovery of his patrimony and dukedom. Upon the present occasion, therefore, he entreated the duke of York not to oppose a loyal and humble suppliant in the recovery of his just rights; but to concur in a measure that was more likely to promote the king's honor than injure his interests. York was deceived by these specious professions; he declared that he would not only approve, but assist him in his pretensions; and both armies meeting, embraced with acclamations of joy.

Whilst these things were transacting in England, Richard continued in Ireland in perfect security. Contrary winds, which at that time continued to blow for three weeks, prevented his receiving any news of the rebellion which had arisen in his native dominions. Upon the first information, therefore, he imprisoned the brothers of the new duke of Lancaster, whom he had taken over with him, and then resolved to go immediately over to fight the enemy in person. Yet, ever wavering in his resolutions, he was persuaded to stay some time longer, till he could prepare ships to transport all his forces together. This delay completed his ruin; so that, when he landed at Milford-haven with a body of twenty thousand men, he had the mortification to find that the duke of York had already espoused the interest of his rival, and that his force was every

way inferior to that of the enemy. He now saw himself in a dreadful situation, in the midst of an enraged people, without any friend on whom to rely, and forsaken by those, who, in the sunshine of his power, had only contributed to fan his follies. His little army gradually began to desert him, till at last he found he had not above six thousand men who followed his standard. Thus, not knowing whom to trust to, or where to turn, he saw no other hopes of safety, but to throw himself upon the generosity of his enemy, and to gain from pity what he could not obtain by arms. He, therefore, sent word to the duke, that he was ready to submit to whatever terms he thought proper to prescribe; and that he earnestly desired a conference. For this purpose, Henry appointed him to meet at the castle of Flint, where he came the next day with his whole army. Richard, who the day before had been brought thither by the earl of Northumberland, descrying his rival's approach from the walls, went down to receive him; while the duke, after some ceremony, entered the castle in complete armour; only his head was bare, in compliment to the fallen king. Richard received him with that open air for which he had been remarkable, and kindly bade him welcome. "My lord the king," returned Henry, with a cool respectful bow, "I am come sooner than you appointed, because your people say, that for two-and-twenty years you have governed with rigour and indiscretion. They are very ill satisfied with your conduct; but, if it please God, I will help you to govern them better for the time to come." To this declaration the king made

no other answer, than this: "Fair cousin, since it pleases you, it pleases us likewise."

But the duke's haughty answer was not the only mortification the unfortunate Richard was to endure. After a short conversation with some of the king's attendants, Henry ordered the king's horses to be brought out of the stable; and two wretched animals being produced, Richard was placed upon one, and his favorite, the earl of Salisbury, upon the other. In this mean equipage they rode to Chester, and were conveyed to the castle, with a great noise of trumpets, and through a vast concourse of people, who were no way moved at the sight. In this manner he was led triumphantly along, from town to town, amidst multitudes who scoffed at him, and extolled his rival. "Long live the good duke of Lancaster, our deliverer!" was the general cry; but as for the king, to use the pathetic words of the poet, "none cried, God bless him." Thus, after repeated indignities, he was confined a close prisoner in the Tower; there, if possible, to undergo a still greater variety of studied insolence, and flagrant contempt. The wretched monarch, humbled in this manner, began to lose the pride of a king with the splendours of royalty, and his spirits sunk to his circumstances. There was no great difficulty, therefore, in inducing him to sign a deed, by which he renounced his crown, as being unqualified for governing the kingdom. Upon this resignation the duke founded his principal claim: but, willing to fortify his pretensions with every appearance of justice, he called a parliament, from which he easily procured a confirma-

tion of his claims. A frivolous charge, consisting of thirty-three articles, was drawn up, and found valid against the king; upon which he was solemnly deposed, and the duke of Lancaster elected in his stead, by the title of Henry IV. Thus began the contest between the houses of York and Lancaster, which, for many years after, deluged the kingdom with blood; and yet, in the end, contributed to settle and confirm the constitution.

When Richard was deposed, the earl of Northumberland made a motion in the house of peers, demanding the advice of parliament with regard to the future treatment of the dethroned prince. To this they replied, that he should be imprisoned in some secure place, where his friends and partisans should not be able to find him. This was accordingly put in practice; but, while he continued alive, the usurper could not remain in safety. Indeed, some conspiracies and commotions, which followed soon after, induced Henry to wish for Richard's death; in consequence of which, one of those assassins that are found in every court, ready to commit the most horrid crimes for reward, went down to the place of this unfortunate monarch's confinement, in the castle of Pontefract, and, with eight of his followers, rushed into his apartment. The king, concluding that their design was to take away his life, resolved not to fall unrevenged, but to sell it as dearly as he could; wherefore wresting a pole-axe from one of the murderers, he soon laid four of their number dead at his feet. But he was at length overpowered, and struck dead by the blow of a pole-axe; although some assert that he was

starved in prison. Thus died the unfortunate Richard, in the thirty-fourth year of his age, and the twenty-third of his reign. Though his conduct was blameable, yet the punishment he suffered was greater than his offences; and, in the end, his sufferings made more converts to his family and cause than ever his most meritorious actions could have procured them. He left no posterity, either legitimate or otherwise.

It was during this reign that John Wickliffe, a secular priest, educated at Oxford, began to propagate his doctrines; and he has the honour of being the first person who had sagacity to see through the errors of the church of Rome, and courage enough to attempt a reformation. He denied the doctrine of the real presence, the supremacy of the church of Rome, and the merit of monastic vows. He maintained that the Scriptures were the sole rule of faith; that the church was dependent on the state; that the clergy ought to possess no estates; and the numerous ceremonies of the church were hurtful to true piety. In short, most of his doctrines were such as the wisdom of posterity thought fit to establish; and Wickliffe failed in being a reformer, only because the minds of men were not yet sufficiently ripened for the truths he endeavoured to inculcate. The clergy of that age did not fail to oppose Wickliffe with fury; but as his doctrines were pleasing to the higher orders of the laity, he found protection from their indignation. John of Gaunt was his particular friend and favourer; and when he was summoned to appear before the bishop of London,

that nobleman attended him into the court, and defended him both from the resentment of the clergy and the rage of the populace. However, in process of time, he had the satisfaction to see the people, who were at first strongly prejudiced against him, entirely declaring in his favour; and although he was often cited to appear before the prelates, yet, from the estimation he was held in both among the higher and lower ranks of the laity, he was always dismissed without injury. In this manner he continued, during a long life, to lessen the credit of the clergy, both by his preaching and writings; and at last died of a palsy, in the year 1385, at his rectory of Lutterworth, in the county of Leicester; while the clergy took care to represent his death as a judgement from Heaven for his multiplied heresies and impieties.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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